

NIGERIA'S AFRICAN RELATIONS: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY  
OF NIGERIA TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA  
1960-1979

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BY  
MARK OBIALOR IGBOELI

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

### Political Science

Igboeli, Mark O.

B.A., State University of  
New York at New Paltz, 1975  
M.A., Ohio University, 1976

Nigeria's African Relations: A Case Study of the  
Foreign Policy of Nigeria Towards Southern Africa,  
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Advisor: Dr. Shelby Lewis

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This dissertation seeks to describe and explain the changing nature of Nigeria's Southern African policy from 1960 to 1979. Utilizing a case study of its Southern African relations during that period, the author argues that certain "power factors" or "capabilities" conditioned Nigeria's foreign policy. These capabilities include its population and size, military preparedness, political processes and leadership, and economic capacity.

While the Southern African policy of the pre-civil war regime is seen as inconsistent and passive, the author maintains that there were significant and positive changes in that policy during the post Nigerian civil war era and that the changes were reflexive of corresponding changes in the above-mentioned capabilities as well as the external environ-

ment.

Looking at the history of the pre and post civil war regimes, it is concluded that Nigeria during its early years did not project a Southern African policy stance commensurate with its capabilities. In other words, the pre-civil war regime was unable to utilize Nigeria's capabilities to influence the racist regimes of Southern Africa nor their Western allies. However as the objective basis of its capabilities changed positively, the post civil war regimes became more aggressive in influencing the events in that region.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, it expected to play a leading role in Africa because of its size, large population and great economic potential. At that time, most of Africa, particularly Southern Africa, remained completely under the clutches of Western imperialists and South African white supremacists. The continent needed a leader who would be committed to effecting the demise of colonialism and racial injustice in Southern Africa. However throughout the first republic of Nigeria which collapsed on January 15, 1966, the Government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa failed to live up to this expectation but rather maintained a "low profile" on most burning African issues. Under Sir Abubakar's leadership Nigeria adopted an extremely passive, and indeed conservative and cautious position in handling international affairs and thus was often referred to as "the sleeping giant of Africa."<sup>1</sup>

Admittedly one can hardly say that the Abubakar regime

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in C.S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 90.

was completely neutral about Africa. For instance, it rejected any form of cooperation with the apartheid regime of South Africa; it played a visible role in the settlement of the Congo crisis; it opposed atomic tests on the African continent and in December 1960, it severed diplomatic relations with France because of her persistent atomic tests in the Sahara.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless its overall foreign policy had been handled with a great deal of caution and ambivalence uncharacteristic of many African states whose activities had been openly aggressive on issues concerning decolonization and the liberation of territories controlled by racist regimes of Southern Africa. James Coleman thus asserts that the country's "comparative moderation [under Sir Abubakar] stands out in sharp contrast to the far more dramatic and militant assertiveness of certain smaller African states such as Ghana and Guinea."<sup>3</sup>

Some eminent Nigerians were more critical of Sir Abubakar's foreign policy in general. In his observation during a major foreign policy debate in parliament in 1961, the Action Group Shadow Foreign Minister, Chief Anthony Enahoro declared, "Not only has this government in regard to foreign policy no

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-127.

<sup>3</sup>James S. Coleman, "The Foreign Policy of Nigeria" in Joseph E. Black and Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., Foreign Policies in a World of Change (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 12.

target, not objective, but to my mind there is even no point of departure....The foreign policy of this government gives us nothing to work for, nothing inspiring."<sup>4</sup>

Many of these critics failed to realize that the Nigerian foreign policy under Sir Abubakar was in part a response to the internal and external environments in which the country had to operate. Therefore, in order to fully understand its dynamics, it is the intention of this reseacher to place it in the context of appropriate foreign policy theories.

#### Theoretical Framework:

A country's foreign policy refers to the totality of objectives, orientation and actions whereby a country seeks to cope with the external environment. These foreign policy components are of course reflexive of the sum total of those principles which have grown out of its history, political processes, leadership, economic and military capacity otherwise referred to as its capabilities.<sup>5</sup> In other words foreign policy study projects a state's objectives, orientation, actions in response to the external environment and its capabilities. These components seem interrelated since the goals of foreign policy are a function of the political pro-

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<sup>4</sup>House of Representatives (H.R.) Debates, September, 1961 Session, p. 345.

<sup>5</sup>K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), pp. 168-171.



cesses by which they are formulated, just as the pattern of state action is guided partly by the objectives towards which it is focused, partly by its capabilities, and partly by the political processes through which it was selected.<sup>6</sup>

First and foremost, nation-states establish foreign policy objectives which serve as guiding principles in their dealings with the international political arena. Many of these objectives are met only by influencing the behavior of other nation states.

Foreign Policy Objectives are classified into short range, middle range and long range objectives.

Short range objectives otherwise described as "core" values and interests of a nation<sup>7</sup> are said to be goals of national self preservation and are often related to fundamental policy objectives of every sovereign nation. For some countries, particularly developing countries such as Nigeria, self preservation could be limited to the defense of national independence and territorial integrity of their home territory. For others like the United States and the Soviet Union, it may embrace a whole catalogue of vital interests abroad.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>James N. Rosenau, International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 167.

<sup>7</sup>See Holsti, p. 145.

<sup>8</sup>This may include any external territory deemed

Middle range objectives may include territorial expansion. In other words, it could embrace all forms of self extension including colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. On the other hand, they may portray the desire of certain countries to eliminate those forms of domination. According to Arnold Wolfers, some countries may seek for the "redress of legitimate grievances such as termination of unjust discrimination, emancipation from foreign control or imposition on others of an ideology or way of life."<sup>9</sup> Most Third World countries are victims of foreign domination in one way or another and therefore are inclined to the pursuit of certain middle range objectives aimed at its eradication in order to achieve economic betterment for their peoples.

Long range objectives or goals of national "self abnegation" are designed to affect the environment beyond a nation's boundaries. Some states may place a higher value on international peace and pursue such an objective through international bodies like the United Nations. The new sovereign states in particular look forward to the world body as an instrument for the achievement of world peace.

Another vital component of a country's foreign policy is its orientation which relates to its "fundamental strategy

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necessary for self preservation, foreign investments and nationals.

<sup>9</sup>Ronenau, pp. 177-179.

for accomplishing its domestic and external objectives and aspirations and for coping with persisting threats."<sup>10</sup>

Orientation could be designed in the form of diplomatic coalitions and military alliances such as the NATO or WARSAW Pact. It could also be isolationist based on the premise that a political unit can best secure its independence by reducing transactions with other units in the external environment.

There is also the strategy of nonalignment adopted mostly by Third World countries and viewed by them as springing from, and being an integral part of the struggle against foreign domination. These countries including Nigeria, hold the conviction that nonalignment would foster independence in the sphere of foreign policy and national defense. In short, nonalignment defines the position of its adherents toward the Great Powers. The adherents spurn the idea of alliances which in many instances would force them to sacrifice their own interest for the needs of Great Powers.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted however that successful implementation of a nation's foreign policy objectives and orientation depends largely on its capabilities or "elements of national power"<sup>12</sup> including such indicators as:

1. The Economy-actual and potential raw mineral re-

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>12</sup>Elements of national power could be seen in Hans

sources, balance of trade, industrial productivity, Gross National Product etc.

2. Military Capacity - the size of armed forces, weapons, skill and morale.
3. Population (favorable and unfavorable) aspects, with emphasis on its relation to the G.N.P. and,
4. Political processes and leadership, emphasizing the alertness and the expertness of the leaders and the nature of the political system.

These elements are so significant in foreign policy formulation and execution that some analysts<sup>13</sup> regard them as the determinants of foreign policy. They constitute those attributes, characteristics, conditions and processes which help to shape foreign policy acts.

However, capabilities must be backed up by adequate "actions" in order to create effective foreign policy. In other words, capabilities must be in harmony with the ability to command the obedience of other states.<sup>14</sup> It means that capabilities or elements of national power do not function in isolation in the moulding of a state's foreign policy-toward another. Rather they function in coordination with vital components such as objectives, orientation and adequate 'action' and skill in order to influence the target country.

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Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 117-141.

<sup>13</sup>Howard Lentner, Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative and Conceptual Approach (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Company), pp. 105-135.

<sup>14</sup>Holsti, pp. 168-181; William Olsen and Fred Sondermann,

Nigeria's foreign policy between 1960 and 1979 can be better understood if it is placed in the context of the foregoing theoretical framework with adequate attention given to (1) the country's foreign policy objectives and orientation during the various administrations within the period under study, (2) whom Nigeria had to influence, (3) what resources or capabilities it had at its disposal to do so, and (4) its successes and failures in utilizing these capabilities.

Nigerian foreign policy objectives during the period under study could be classified into short range, middle range and long range. Its short range objectives were those related to the self preservation of its political unit and the defense of its national interests. This statement could easily lead to the risk inherent in the task of defining goals since "national interests" could be given different interpretations by various states. According to Arnold Wolfers, this term "can become so ambitious as to transform itself into a goal of unlimited self extention."<sup>15</sup> However various Nigerian administrations had clearly indicated that Nigeria had no ambition for acquisition of territories beyond its borders.<sup>16</sup> There-

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The Theory and Practice of International Relations (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), pp. 292-303.

<sup>15</sup>Rosenau, p. 178.

<sup>16</sup>Federal Ministry of Information, News Release, No. 1538, December 1, 1976.

fore, assuming that a country's national interests are those delineated by its officials, Nigeria's 'core' interests meant the protection of the sovereignty and political independence of its home territory, and also the promotion of its economic interests operating within the country.<sup>17</sup>

Various Nigerian administrations between 1960 and 1979 also pursued middle range objectives aimed at the elimination of all forms of colonialism on the African continent particularly in Southern Africa. They believed that Nigerian independence would have little meaning unless the African continent was "free of domination, racial discrimination and various indignities to which the African is subjected."<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, Nigeria aimed at the economic emancipation of the African continent. Hence it played a significant role in the creation of the Economic Community of West African States.<sup>19</sup> It also put its weight behind the formation of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), whose members pledged their absolute dedication to the total liberation and emancipation of African territories still under colonialism.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Federal Nigeria 1:1 (1976), pp. 5-6; 16-19.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., The ECOWAS would serve as a springboard for the establishment of an African Common Market.

<sup>20</sup>Federal Nigeria (1976), pp. 16-19. See also C.S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy.

Nigeria's long range objective was based on the promotion of peaceful co-existence in the world through the United Nations and its affiliated bodies. Sir Abubakar stated this succinctly:

We shall not allow our direct and primary interest in African affairs to blind us to the grave and vital issues which dominate the wider international scene. In the United Nations and in any other way possible, we shall direct our energies and influence to helping to reach solutions which will contribute to the<sup>21</sup> peace of the nations and well being of mankind.

In order to successfully pursue these foreign policy objectives, Nigeria adopted the strategy of non-alignment which, according to Sir Abubakar would "entail no diplomatic subordination to foreigners or abandonment of the nation's neutralist position in foreign affairs."<sup>22</sup> In a major foreign policy speech in the House of Representatives on August 20, 1960, Sir Abubakar made his administration's position clear. He declared,

We shall...endeavour to remain on friendly terms with every nation which recognizes and respect our sovereignty and we shall not blindly follow the lead of anyone; so far as it is possible, the policy on each occasion will be selected with proper independent objectivity in Nigeria's national interest. We consider it wrong for the Federal Government to associate itself<sup>23</sup> as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs.

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<sup>21</sup>See C.S. Phillips, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup>Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., The Elephants and the Grass: A Study of Non-Alignment (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956), p. 63.

<sup>23</sup>H.R. Debates, August Session, 1960, pp. 289-290.

One would expect that because of this declared policy, Sir Abubakar's administration would relate to the Eastern bloc just as impartially as it would to the West. Instead it became excessively pre-occupied with the friendship of the Western nations, thus succumbing to compromises which were clearly at odds with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and orientation. For instance the Abubakar administration refused to criticize Britain for her support of the Portuguese repression of Angolan freedom fighters when most African countries did so;<sup>24</sup> it refused to break up diplomatic relations with Britain, consistent with the resolution adopted the O.A.U. in 1965 when the Ian Smith regime in Zimbabwe illegally declared independence, even when most African countries with more economic interest at stake could do so;<sup>25</sup> it refused to train freedom fighters or accept the concept of an armed liberation struggle in Southern Africa;<sup>26</sup> but more importantly, the Abubakar administration accepted the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact which gave Britain the rights to establish bases in Nigeria with transit rights and rights for tropical training facilities for her armed forces. In addition Sir Abubakar's government agreed to make available

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph Okpaku, Nigeria: Dilemma of Nationhood (New York: The Third Press, 1972), pp. 57-69.

<sup>25</sup> Federal Nigeria 1:1 (1976), p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



to Britain facilities at Kano and Lagos airfields for both "assistance for the training and development of the armed forces of the (Nigerian) Federation...."<sup>27</sup>

This action seemed irreconcilable with the country's policy of non-alignment, a posture which is accorded more meaning largely in the military dimension of international politics. Many critics argued that it was not in the best interest of Nigeria to grant base rights to an imperial power which still maintained several colonies in Eastern and Southern Africa<sup>28</sup> since it could use it as a launching pad to protect its interests in those territories including South Africa in case of any nationalist opposition.<sup>29</sup> Others argued that it would damage Nigeria's image among African governments which were committed to getting rid of colonialism in Africa.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Gordon J. Idang, "The Nigerian Political Process and Foreign Policy: The Ratification and Renunciation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Agreement." Unpublished Dissertation, State University of New York, 1969.

<sup>28</sup>At that time Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Botswana, Tanganyika and Rhodesia were still British colonies.

<sup>29</sup>C.S. Phillips, p. 36.

<sup>30</sup>These were Ghana, Guinea, United Arab Republic and Mali. Nkrumah for instance sent proposals to the independent African states for an African High Command. But he excluded Nigeria because Ghana thought that it was "improper for an African state to enter into a defense agreement with any other state outside the African continent." The Service, December, 1960.

On the other hand, Sir Abubakar's foreign policy orientation towards the Communist countries was that of coolness and restraint. His administration established a wide range of discriminatory policies which pushed Nigeria beyond the limits of credibility in regard to its often acclaimed principle of non-alignment. These include its refusal until December 1961, to repeal the ban placed on Communist literature; the restriction on the U.S.S.R. to limit the number of their diplomats to ten while other embassies were left unrestricted as such; and discriminatory allocations of diplomatic car plate numbers (five were allocated to the U.S.S.R., as against 100 each to the U.S. and U.K.).<sup>31</sup>

Nigeria's obsessive dependence on the West during the first republic was criticized by enlightened Nigerians who contended that the country could utilize its capabilities or elements of national power to defend its national interests. These elements included its giant size and population which afforded large markets for the industrialized world and a potential resource for a large military establishment.<sup>32</sup> They also included its vast economic resources. For instance, unlike many developing countries, which are identified with one crop economy, Nigeria could boast of a large variety of

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<sup>31</sup>C.S. Phillips, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup>Reference to military establishment here indicates military personnel which could assist in the liberation of Southern Africa.

agricultural export products like cocoa, palm oil and kernels (Nigeria is the largest exporter of palm produce in the world), rubber, cotton, peanuts and oil, and other tropical products.<sup>33</sup> Besides agricultural products, Nigeria exported considerable quantities of tin, gold, columbite, limestone and petroleum.<sup>34</sup>

It was also the contention of many progressive elements in Nigeria that the country had dynamic leaders especially in the South who fought relentlessly for Nigerian independence. These leaders along with Nkrumah of Ghana had started fighting for the emancipation of Africa from colonial rule long before the dawn of independence of the various African countries.<sup>35</sup>

However as much as the successful implementation of a country's foreign policy depends on its elements of power, these elements must be backed up by effective and skillful actions in order to influence a target country. In the case of Southern Africa Nigeria's target was the West and their outpost South Africa. Until the emergence of the oil sector as predominant in the Nigerian economy, the probability of the government utilizing its resources to influence the target countries in order to limit the impact of discrimi-

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<sup>33</sup>U.S. Agency for International Development, Africa: Economic Growth Trends (Statistics and Report Division, Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, May 1972), p. 26.

<sup>34</sup>Business International, "Nigeria: Africa's Economic Giant." Business International Corporation, January, 1979, p. 37.

<sup>35</sup>K.B.C. Onwubiko, History of West Africa, Book II

nation and colonialism in Southern Africa was very low. This was partly because Nigeria feared the disutility of such a measure since it needed Western technology, investments, goods and services, as much as the West needed its agricultural and mineral products.

Nigeria's excessive reliance on the West during the Abubakar administration could be traced back to the country's colonial history and legacy. Nigeria was a British Colony and like most ex-British colonies in Africa, its foreign policy making capability was limited by the legacies of British colonialism. Apart from bequeathing some elements of Western culture, the British colonial administration left behind educational, administrative, legal and financial systems.<sup>36</sup> Consequently Nigeria's economy became structurally tied to Britain specifically, and to the West in general. Thus economic dependence with its attendant superimposed values and institutions eliminated any tendency on the part of Nigeria to antagonize or confront the Western bloc. Hence Nigeria could not utilize her capabilities to influence events in Southern Africa.

There were also various internal constraints on Nigerian capabilities during most part of the first independence decade.

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(Jurong, Singapore: F.E.P. International Ltd.), p. 368.

<sup>36</sup>Olajide Aluko, ed., The Foreign Policies of African States (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), pp. 177-178.

Within the country itself, there were sectional struggles by the regions<sup>37</sup> for the control of the Federal government and for the possession of greater shares of the national 'cake.' Underneath this whole struggle was ethnic rivalry which dominated all aspects of the Nigerian political scene. Quite often, it precipitated mistrust, violence and disturbances especially during elections and eventually led to the overthrow of the Abubakar regime on January 15, 1966 by a small group of army officers. These officers accused Sir Abubakar of ineptitude in domestic and foreign affairs.<sup>38</sup> A military government assumed power under the leadership of General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Ibo officer from Eastern Nigeria.

Until his overthrow in another military coup in July 1966, General Ironsi was too preoccupied with serious domestic issues to play any vigorous role in foreign policy. His regime was very unpopular with the Northerners who were always opposed to Southern domination. He gradually de-emphasized Nigeria's long standing regional semi-autonomy and tried to create a unitary state.<sup>39</sup> He also planned for rapid unification of

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<sup>37</sup>There were four regions: The Northern Region (dominated by the Hausas); the Western Region (dominated by the Yorubas); the Eastern Region (dominated by the Ibos); and the mid Western Region (dominated by the Ibos and the Uhrobo peoples).

<sup>38</sup>Ruth First, Power in Africa (New York: Random House Inc., 1970), p. 285.

<sup>39</sup>The post independence constitutional provision gave

regional civil services, an institution greatly cherished by the Northerners as a safeguard against Southern domination.<sup>40</sup> But the immediate cause of his downfall was his haste in proclaiming a new unitary Constitution by his Decree #34 (May 24, 1966).<sup>41</sup> This was a slap in the face of the Northerners who felt that it was no longer possible for them to control the federal government.

With the overthrow of General Ironsi, General Yakubu Gowon, a Northerner emerged as the next Head of State.<sup>42</sup> Initially, General Gowon was unable to establish sovereignty over Eastern Nigeria inhabited predominantly by the Ibos who feared systematic extermination under a federal government controlled by the Northerners.<sup>43</sup> The developments that

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the regional governments nullifying power over the implementation of certain treaties. Section 69 stipulates that any law enacted by the federal government for the purpose of implementing any international treaty, convention or agreement, concerning matters falling within the exclusive or concurrent powers of the federal government "shall not come into operation in a region unless the Governor of that region has consented to its having effect (Black and Thompson, p. 389). Hence it was common for regional Premiers to make foreign policy statements contrary to the position of the federal government.

<sup>40</sup> See John Ostheimer, Nigerian Politics (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), p. 62.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Department of State, "Nigeria," Background Notes, 1975, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Frederick Forsyth, The Biafran Story (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), Chapter 6.

followed led to secession of Eastern Nigeria, later known as Biafra, from the Nigerian federation and subsequently to a bloody civil war which lasted from July 6, 1967 to January 15, 1970.

The Civil war seriously affected Nigeria's external relations. Western influence was reduced in exchange for a considerable increase in Soviet presence. This was due to the refusal of Nigeria's Western friends to support Nigeria at the initial stage of her war against Biafra.<sup>44</sup>

Alternatively Nigeria cultivated the friendship of the Soviet Union which consequently backed her with massive military and economic aid in order to successfully prosecute its war against Biafra.<sup>45</sup> Generally it seemed reasonable to contend that Soviet aid was an important element in the federal government's victory over the secessionists. Thus the civil war experience removed the inhibition of the Nigerian Government towards Communist countries<sup>46</sup> and its total dependence on the West. Furthermore, with the boost

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<sup>44</sup>Radio Moscow, quoted in West Africa, 1970, p. 122.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>At independence, Nigeria was suspicious of Communist countries and their influence. Sir Abubakar regarded Communism as an evil and once declared, "I and my colleagues are determined that while we are responsible for the government of the federation of Nigeria and for the welfare of its people, we shall use every means in our power to prevent the infiltration of Communism and Communist ideas into Nigeria." (Quoted from Sam Epelle, ed., Nigeria Speaks: Speeches of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Lagos: Longmans, 1964), p. 10.

given to the Nigerian economy by the oil boom from the early 1970s, a major constraint in policy making was reduced.

The military regime of General Gowon first embarked on a "low profile" African policy due to the civil war. However after its successful completion in 1970, Nigeria assumed a dynamic foreign policy stance, particularly in relation to African affairs. In effect, the post civil war regimes<sup>47</sup> acted commendably in the field of foreign relations.<sup>48</sup> They abandoned the lukewarm approach to international problems and elected to make their position known even when such position was in direct conflict with the West. In other words, the period between the collapse of the first republic of Nigeria in 1966 and the completion of the civil war in January 1970, marked the end of an era and the beginning of another in the history of Nigeria's external relations. Therefore the purpose of this study is to describe, analyze and compare the Southern African policy of Nigeria's first independent regime, 1960-1966 to subsequent regimes, 1967-1979.

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<sup>47</sup>These included the administrations of General Gowon (1970-1975), Murtala Muhammed (1975-1976), and Olusengun Obasanjo (1976-1979).

<sup>48</sup>For instance in 1972, Nigeria rejected the British manoeuvre with regard to point by point majority rule in Zimbabwe, but later participated in negotiations leading to that country's independence in March 1980. The post civil war regimes also helped to settle the Angolan crisis in 1975, thus contributing immensely to the demise of colonialism and imperialism in Angola. For details of these commendable actions, see Olajide Aluko, ed., The Foreign Policies of African States (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), pp. 163-195.



Hypothesis: There were substantial and positive changes in Nigeria's African relations between 1970 and 1979. These changes resulted from the dynamic leadership of the post civil war regimes and also the increased economic and military capacity of Nigeria. The hypothesis stems from the assumption that "change in foreign policy might be generated by fundamental changes in capabilities conceptualized as determinants of Nigerian foreign policy."<sup>49</sup>

A case study of Nigeria's foreign policy toward Southern Africa is utilized to demonstrate the specific nature of the changes in policy orientation and implementation between the pre-civil war and the post civil war eras in Nigerian history. The researcher has embarked on this aspect of study because although a number of extant studies of Nigeria's foreign policy in general have been done yet no serious research about its Southern African relations has been undertaken. In addition, Southern Africa has always posed a dominant problem for African states as well as a major issue in international relations.

Various materials including journals, periodicals, newspaper articles and pamphlets, government publications, brochures and interviews with officials of the Nigerian Mission at the United Nations and the Nigerian Consulate in New York are utilized in this study. There is also an exhaustive

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<sup>49</sup>Charles Kegley, Jr., and Eugene Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy: Patterns and Process (New York: St. Marins Press, 1979), pp. 423-424.

examination of Nigeria's Southern African Policy in the U.N. and the O.A.U. since all Nigerian administrations pledged their unwavering support for these organizations and also indicated their willingness to utilize them as much as possible to achieve their foreign policy objectives.

Chapter II deals with the capabilities or determinants of Nigeria's African Policy and how changes in some of these factors could result into corresponding changes of the country's African policy.

Chapter III deals with Nigeria's policy towards Southern Africa (1960-1966). This will also include the utilization of the international agencies (U.N. and the O.A.U.) as a forum for explaining her position on Southern African issues.

Chapter IV portrays a general perspective of Nigeria's relations with Southern Africa (1967-1979) including its utilization of the O.A.U. and the U.N. to achieve its objectives while chapter V gives a summary of the study and an update on the post military regime.

## CHAPTER II

### ELEMENTS OF NIGERIAN POWER

It was argued in the last chapter that the amount of influence wielded by a country over others depends considerably on the capabilities which could be mobilized in support of its foreign policy objectives and orientation. To put it another way, the successful implementation of a country's foreign policy is dependent partially at least on the available capabilities described as the determinants of foreign policy. However what is more crucial is the ability of a country to skillfully mobilize these capabilities in order to influence a target country.

The research also posited that significant and fundamental changes in one or some combination of the capabilities conceptualized as the determinants of foreign policy might generate corresponding foreign policy changes. These theories are intended to provide a premise for a better understanding of the African policy positions of the pre and post civil war regimes in Nigeria. The purpose of this chapter therefore is (1) to discuss the capabilities or elements of power at the disposal of various Nigerian administrations during the period under study, and their impact on Nigerian foreign policy.

(2) To demonstrate how changes in these capabilities produced a corresponding changing pattern of Nigeria's African policy after the civil war, and (3) To highlight the successes or failures of the various administrations in their attempt to mobilize these capabilities to achieve foreign policy objectives.

Nigerian elements of power or capabilities included its economic capacity, military preparedness and political leadership. These factors underwent considerable changes after the civil war. For instance, the post civil war era experienced a more dynamic leadership, increased military preparedness and a growing economic capacity. It is important first of all to discuss these capabilities, emphasizing the changes that occurred in the post civil-war era. This will be followed by an analysis of the successes or failures of the various administrations in utilizing their capabilities.

#### Economic Capacity

Nigeria's capabilities could be measured in terms of its natural resources. It possessed a larger variety of agricultural products than many African countries.<sup>1</sup> Some of these products included palm-produce, groundnuts, cocoa, rubber, and cotton. Its mineral products included tin, gold, columbite, limestone and oil. Oil, which is an indispensable

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<sup>1</sup>Department of State, "Nigeria" Background Notes, May, 1975, p. 1.

material was by far the country's most important resource. Production by 1976 exceeded two million barrels a day, making Nigeria the sixth largest exporter of oil in the world.<sup>2</sup> According to students of International Relations, natural resources such as those possessed by Nigeria could constitute a stable factor that exert an important influence upon the power of a nation in regard to other nations.<sup>3</sup> Permanent scarcity of them could result into permanent weakness in international politics, while their unlimited availability could create a positive impact on national power or shifts in the distribution of power.

Despite the fact that Nigeria possessed these resources, the Abubakar regime lacked the skill to mobilize them in support of its foreign policy objectives. With its heavily Western orientation, the country's economy maintained significant trade ties with Western countries particularly Britain which incidentally, was a crucial target for its influence purposes. In 1961 81.8 percent of Nigeria's imports came from Western countries including Japan, while 92.6 percent of her exports went to these countries. By way of contrast, trade relations with the East European countries and China were not spectacular. (See Table I, p. 25)

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<sup>2</sup>Business International, "Nigeria: Africa's Economic Giant," Business International Corporation, January, 1979, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>See Hans Morgenthau, pp. 120-123; Howard Lentner, pp. 29, 58.

TABLE I  
Nigeria's Trade With the Great Powers (in £N)

Years	Exports			Imports		
	Western countries including Japan	United Kingdom	Eastern European countries and China	Western countries including Japan	United Kingdom	Eastern European countries and China
1961	157,521,000	76,217,000	1,996,000	181,833,000	85,192,000	6,920,000
%	92.6	44.8	1.8	81.8	38.3	3.1
1966	256,389,748	105,177,404	3,349,282	222,891,488	76,252,525	11,269,499
%	92.4	37.9	1.2	86.9	29.7	4.4
1971	571,164,203	139,277,502	22,430,115	470,164,573	172,079,294	30,396,217
%	89.2	2.18	3.5	87.2	31.9	5.6

SOURCE: Olajide Aluko, The Foreign Policies of African States, p. 176.

Western orientation during the Abubakar administration was more apparent in relation to aid and investments from overseas. Under that administration, Nigeria received virtually all its foreign aid from Western sources or indirectly through the World Bank and the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> In addition, approximately eighty percent of the 200 million pounds sterling in overseas investment within the country was British.<sup>5</sup> Therefore Nigeria's economic dependence on the West negatively affected its exercise of influence since "the success or failure of acts of influence is the extent to which there are needs between two countries in any influence relationship."<sup>6</sup>

However due to the civil war experience, the overwhelming Western influence became eroded. Table I shows a considerable rise in Nigeria's trade with the East European countries, and a continuing decline in its trade with Britain during the post Abubakar regimes.

Above all, the emergence of the oil sector in the 1970s as predominant in the country's economy became instrumental to the dramatic changes in its economic growth and influence.

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<sup>4</sup>Douglass Anglin, "Nigeria: Political Non-alignment and Economic Alignment," Journal of Modern African Studies 2:2 (1964), p. 241.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Holsti, p. 172.

The export of petroleum products alone reached \$9.1 billion in 1976 and thus accounted for 90 percent of export and foreign exchange earnings that year.<sup>7</sup> In 1979, the Gross National product rose to \$27.3 billion. This entails a fourteen-fold increase in total output of the country's economy between 1960 and 1979. This also indicates a growth rate of ten percent and per capita income of \$333.<sup>8</sup>

### Military Preparedness

As an element of national power, military preparedness is dependent upon the quantity and quality of men and military equipments and their distribution among different branches of the military complex. But more importantly, it requires that a military establishment be capable of defending its foreign policies.<sup>9</sup> The following paragraphs are designed to demonstrate the increasing military capacity of Nigeria which considerably helped it to pursue its foreign policy objectives.

Before the civil war, Nigeria had a ceremonial army of about 10,000 officers professionally under arms of whom 8000<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Department of State, "Nigeria," Background Notes, 1977, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>West Africa (April 9, 1979), p. 613. There will be a detailed analysis of Nigeria's mobilization of economic capability toward the end of this chapter.

<sup>9</sup>Morgenthau, pp. 126-128.

<sup>10</sup>William Gutteridge, The Military in African Politics



were in the army which was principally light infantry, with British equipment, no armour, and little artillery support.<sup>11</sup> The small navy which was British trained had acquired seven crafts from Britain at independence, and a few more were subsequently bought. The airforce was virtually non-existent at independence but was subsequently formed and trained by West Germany.<sup>12</sup>

However the war to end Biafran secession led to the enlistment of several thousands of officers. Thus at the end of the war in January 1970, the numerical strength of the country's military was estimated at between 240,000 and 250,000.<sup>13</sup> Both the navy and the airforce grew immensely. The navy increased ten-fold from 500 officers and men in 1961 to 5000 in 1971 while the airforce recorded a personnel strength of 7000 officers.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of the civil war, the Nigerian army was equipped with 45 saladin and 15 AML-601-90 armoured cars; 25 Ferret and some Fox Scout cars; 12 Saracen armoured personnel carriers; 76mm, 25-pounder, 105mm and 130mm guns/howitzers; 20mm and 40mm anti-aircraft guns. The navy was equipped with

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London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1969), p. 67.

<sup>11</sup>New Africa (October 1979), p. 29.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1971-1972, p. B650.

<sup>14</sup>Julius Emeka Okolo and Winston Langley, p. 214.

a submarine chaser, several seaward defense boats, a landing craft, and a few fast armed patrol boats acquired from the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> The inventory also included one anti-submarine warfare/anti aircraft frigate; two corvettes; two large patrol crafts and seacat surface to air missiles were on order.<sup>16</sup>

The airforce possessed 36 combatant aircrafts, one light bomber Squadron with four 11-28; two ground attack fighters, air defense squadrons with 12F-27, one F-28, Six C-130H, seven C-47, one DC6 and 6 Noratlas; one search and rescue helicopter squadron with three whirl wind, four BO-105 and two Puma; three training service squadrons with four MIG-15s, 20 Bulldogs, 10P-149D, 23D0-27/-28, three Navajo and eight 1-29, and Six Alouette III helicopters.<sup>17</sup>

Military expenditure also increased considerably due to the civil war. Annual expenditures indicate that while in 1964/1965, Nigeria spent \$43.6 million (30 percent of total national budget), on defense, in 1968-1969, the peak of the civil war, it spent \$256 million (61% of the national expenditure), and in 1969-1970, it spent \$433 million, 64 percent of total national expenditure.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>A.C.R. (1977-1978), p. B741.

<sup>17</sup>The Military Balance 1977-1978 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies).

<sup>18</sup>Harold D. Nelson, et. al., Area Handbook for Nigeria (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 400-409.

After the civil war, Nigeria still maintained a high military expenditure. For instance 1971-1972 estimates were \$757 million which raised speculations about Nigeria's leading role in the projected O.A.U. High Command<sup>19</sup> if it materialized. Then in 1979, the defense budget rose sharply to \$1.75 billion, which was second only to South Africa in Africa South of the Sahara.<sup>20</sup> In overall military manpower, Zaire ranked second to Nigeria with 50,000 troops, while Ethiopia ranked third, with 44,570 soldiers. Ghana maintained the fourth place with about 18,000 troops.<sup>21</sup>

#### Political Leadership

The quality of political leadership in any given political system can dictate the nature of national goals and aspirations pursued by the government in regard to its external relations. It influences tendencies to mobilize other capabilities needed to conduct foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> According to

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<sup>19</sup>For details of the O.A.U. High Command, see Africa Contemporary Record, 1972, p. B658. Also see Claude Phillips, The Development of the Nigerian Foreign Policy.

<sup>20</sup>New Africa (October 1979), p. 29.

<sup>21</sup>Africa Report 19 (July-August, 1974), p. 25. South Africa has far smaller army than Nigeria but maintains the highest per capita defense expenditure and the most modern and extensive military equipment in Africa. Refer to the Report of the Special Committee Against Apartheid: Review of the Developments in Military Collaboration with South Africa. (U.N. Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, Centre Against Apartheid, July 17, 1978).

<sup>22</sup>Howard Lentner, p. 208.

Howard Lentner, a high level of mobilization of capabilities on behalf of national goals needs a leader who is confident in himself and who articulates sentiments and expressed emotions and ideals that lead people to follow.<sup>23</sup> It also requires leadership functions which stimulate the development of attachment to the country by its citizens, and successful solution of the country's domestic problems which assures a propensity to support the authoritative decisions of the leaders and a sustained support for the implementation of the country's policies.

In order for Nigeria to be able to mobilize its existing capabilities, its leaders should (1) be willing, able and courageous enough to make necessary decisions in foreign policy, (2) maintain unanimity of the political leadership in its commitments to the achievement of foreign policy objectives, (3) work assiduously to secure internal cohesion and (4) strive to stay out of the neo-colonial structure in spite of enormous pressures and temptations. In order to understand the concept of Nigeria's leadership as an "element of national power," this author has chosen to discuss in detail, the leadership roles of the pre-and post civil war regimes, emphasizing their successes or failures in the mobilization process.

When Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960 as a federation of three regions, Northern, Western and Eastern,

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary system of government, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was elected its first Prime Minister. To understand the basis of his political behavior, it may be essential to mention among other things that he was brought up in the traditional Islamic environment in Northern Nigeria. He was a devout Muslim and feudal aristocrat, and by nature, extremely conservative. Throughout his tenure of office as Prime Minister, he retained pro-British tendencies which resulted in a lack of an independent foreign policy posture. The implication of this is that Abubakar's leadership became conservative and reactionary. Thus when Ghana under Nkrumah was aspiring to leadership of all Africa and associated with more radical groups of states, Nigeria was much less ambitious and associated with more conservative states.<sup>24</sup>

Under a federal system of government, Sir Abubakar was faced with serious problems that arose from inter-regional differences. In the first place, there were three major political parties (N.C.N.C., N.P.C., and A.G.), each, entrenched in a region. But since none of the parties won enough seats in the 1959 election which was held to create the first independent government of Nigeria, the Federal Government became a coalition of two of them (NPC and NCNC) with the Action Group (AG), forming the official opposition in parliament.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>25</sup>In the 1959 election, the N.P.C. won 142 seats, N.C.N.C.

But the coalition parties were diametrically different in political orientation. For instance, while the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.), Sir Abubakar's party, was very conservative and was controlled by the Northern Regional Government, with its membership limited to persons of Northern origin, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) was very radical, nationalistic and liberal. On this point, Okolo and Langley asserted:

The Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) urged the desirability of gaining membership in the (British) Commonwealth; of joining the Western bloc, and by extension disavowing a non-alignment of neutralist posture; of refusing and avoiding ties with or aid from, the Soviet bloc; and of postponing talks of African Unity. The N.C.N.C. on the other hand, while initially vague on matters pertaining to Pan Africanism, was vigorously opposed to identification with any bloc; forcefully, urged a policy of non-alignment...and supported the idea of a federation of West African states.<sup>26</sup>

Partly, as a result of the diverse foreign policy positions of the coalition parties, and partly due to political constraints imposed by regionalism, the foreign policy making capability of the federal government was hampered.

Secondly, under the federal structure, political constraints were created by constitutional provision which allowed regional governments to nullify the implementation of federal government treaties. By implication, any region could refuse the implementation of a treaty signed by the federal government "unless the Governor of that region has consented to its

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82, Action Group, 73, and independent candidates, 8.

<sup>26</sup>Julius Okolo and Winston Langley, op. cit., p. 326.

having effect."<sup>27</sup>

On the basis of a constitutional provision that "both federal and regional governments had concurrent jurisdiction over industrial development," the regional governments undertook extensive economic tours abroad for the purpose of attracting investments to their regions. While on these tours, the Premiers sometimes made foreign policy statements contrary to the foreign policy stance of the federal government. For instance in 1960, the Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr. Okpara took a jibe at the federal government by cabling a congratulatory message to Dr. Nkrumah of Ghana praising him for his views on the unity of Africa and expressing the hope that other African leaders would follow his example.<sup>28</sup> That same year, the Western Nigerian government established a "Western Nigerian Information and Industrial Development Office" in New York City. However the federal Government ordered it to be closed down.<sup>29</sup>

On his part, the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, while on official tour of the Arab nations of the Middle East in 1961, had extended official invitations to the Heads of the Moslem states. This was an encroachment on the Federal Government jurisdiction. The enraged Nigerian press called on

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<sup>27</sup>Black and Thompson, p. 389.

<sup>28</sup>Ituen Bassey, "Nigeria's Foreign Relations: A Study of the Factors Influencing Nigeria's Foreign Relations After Independence. (Unpublished Dissertation, St. Louis University, 1970). p. 179.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

the Prime Minister to discipline the Premier.<sup>30</sup> Again, in 1965, he openly declared that "the state of Israel does not exist" despite the fact that Israel enjoyed the recognition of the Federal Government.<sup>31</sup> Such divergent statements gave Nigeria the image of a state that "speaks with too many voices."<sup>32</sup>

Thirdly, the Abubakar administration was plagued by domestic disturbances which eventually ended in the collapse of the first republic and consequently a civil war. First of all, there was the census controversy of 1963 in which each region harbored deep suspicion that the other regions had much smaller population than it had claimed in the census of 1962.<sup>33</sup> The same attitude prevails today making it difficult to discern the appropriate population figures of Nigeria.

Major crisis also erupted in Western Nigeria in 1965<sup>34</sup> which resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency in that region. The incident was precipitated by dissatisfaction

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<sup>30</sup>West African Pilot (Lagos), June 27, 1961, (Editorial Column).

<sup>31</sup>Africa Diary (September 18-24, 1965), p. 2518.

<sup>32</sup>Claude Phillips, op. cit., pp. 80-87; James Coleman, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

<sup>33</sup>For the details of the census controversy, see Kenneth Post and Michael Vickers, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria 1960-1966 (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), Chapters 3-5.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



with the result of the rigged Western Nigeria election in 1965. The regional election was followed by extensive popular disorder which the Prime Minister seemed to lack the power to arrest. The situation was still fluid when the military siezed power in January 1966, giving rise to the untimely death of the Prime Minister.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Nkrumah summarized the Nigerian situation when on a special broadcast in his tribute he said,

Sir Abubakar died a victim of forces he did not understand and a martyr to a neo colonialist system he was merely the figurehead....It is right that we should honour his memory. But it is equally important that we should understand the factors which brought about his death. His early life was spent in Northern Nigeria where neo-colonialism, in its earliest form of indirect rule, had been developed and perfected since the beginning of this century. Subconsciously the ruling classes of Northern Nigeria came to look upon British imperial power as the source of their authority and they considered independence merely as a method of continuing indirect rule over a larger area by other means. Here it was that the inherent inconsistencies and contradictions of neocolonialism showed themselves. Those who inherited power in Nigeria assumed that they had only to copy the British parliamentary system in every detail to ensure freedom and justice in Nigeria. In fact by doing so, they only transferred to the parliamentary stage the underlying contradictions of Nigeria as colonially constituted. What Sir Abubakar and his Government succeeded to was an artificial state created to suit the needs of early 20th century imperialism....On independence...the Federal Government was left with the shadow of authority, but real power rested with the regions. Behind this facade of different forms, imperialism sought to perpetuate its interests. Sir Abubakar and his Government therefore faced an impossible task....<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>William Gutteridge, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>36</sup>West Africa (January 29, 1966), p. 133.

After the end of the civil war, there were some important changes which made Nigerian leadership and its machinery for foreign policy formulation more effective. General Gowon had earlier in 1967 reorganized the regions into twelve states, each of which was too small and too weak politically and economically to question the authority of the Federal Government or defy it. The federal Government also centralized all aspects of foreign policy under its jurisdiction. Thus no longer can regional leaders make important foreign policy pronouncements that gave the country the reputation of "speaking with too many voices."

Moreover the Constitution (suspension and modification) Decree of March 1967 suspended important parts of the previous constitution. It proscribed political parties which hastened the collapse of the first republic, and transferred some of the important powers vested in the regional governments to the federal Government.<sup>37</sup> The present Constitution favors a multi-party political system and lays down strict rules to govern the organization of the parties and ensure their national character. It also stipulates that no parties with religious, regional or ethnic bases will be tolerated.

It is worthwhile to note that the post civil war administrations represented a political leadership which were willing, able and courageous to take necessary decisions in

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<sup>37</sup>Olaide Aluko, "Federal-State Relationship," in the Quarterly Journal of Administration (July , 1969).

foreign affairs. Thus observers view the post civil war foreign policy (particularly that of Muhammed/Obasanjo administration), as active in the sense that "it is independent of major constraints...(and in that it assumes the momentum of initiative...."<sup>38</sup>

Having discussed the elements of Nigerian power and the dynamics of those elements from 1960 through 1979, it may be appropriate to examine the attempt by the various regimes to mobilize them to achieve foreign policy objectives. In order to achieve its African objectives, Nigeria would have to influence the Western countries, particularly Britain and the United States, and their outpost, South Africa.

Some useful deductions can be made from the discussion on Nigeria's capabilities. First, in regard to its economy during Abubakar's regime, it seems clear that although great quantities of agricultural and mineral products were present, they could not successfully be mobilized in order to carry out the country's foreign policy objectives. Some critics might argue that Nigeria could get those target countries to succumb to economic blackmail. But according to David Singer, "international influence is far from a one way affair....While 'A' is planning or attempting to influence 'B,' 'B' is itself exercising some impact on 'A's' behavior."<sup>39</sup> For instance, on

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<sup>38</sup>Federal Nigeria 1:1 (1976), p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>J. David Singer, "Inter-Nation Influence: A Formal Model," in James Rosenau, International Politics and Foreign

independence, Nigeria was desperately short of capital and technical know-how to develop its natural resources<sup>40</sup> just as the Western nations needed Nigeria's natural resources for industrial purposes. But again, the success or failure of acts of influence depends on the extent of needs between two sides in any influence continuum.

During Sir Abubakar's regime, Nigeria's economy was structurally tied to the West through which Nigerians could obtain aid and investments.<sup>41</sup> It is a fact that its size offered an enviable market for the West for the disposal of their manufactured goods and procurement of raw materials, yet any attempt to utilize this factor for influence purposes could become a disutility since the West has alternative markets in other parts of Africa.<sup>42</sup> Moreover Nigeria feared the boomerang of economic blackmail since that could precipitate retaliations in the form of discontinuation of foreign

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Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 382.

<sup>40</sup>Claude Phillips, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>41</sup>For instance The First Nigerian Development Plan entailed a total expenditure of 1.9 billion dollars of which 949 million dollars were supposed to come from the West. Federal Nigeria 1:1 (1976), p. 5.

<sup>42</sup>The West could buy cocoa and palm produce from Ghana and Sierra Leone; Rubber from Liberia; Groundnuts from Gambia and Senegal; Minerals like gold, diamond coal, tin etc. from South Africa and Zaire; and oil from various areas of the world. (Refer to K.B.C. Onwubiko, History of West Africa 1800-Present Day; Ann and Neva Seidman, South Africa and U.S.

aid and investments which it so badly needed. This therefore raises the question why Nigeria chose to organize its economic relations in such a way as to limit its freedom of action in foreign policy, when alternative arrangements of economic relations could be pursued.<sup>43</sup>

However, with the country's oil boom in the 1970s, and as a result of the insatiable demand for this commodity throughout the industrial world, Nigeria's economic capability became very potent. Hans Morgenthau recognized the impact of oil upon national power when he said, "The emergence of oil as an indispensable raw material has brought about a shift in the relative power...of nations."<sup>44</sup> He added, "The Soviet Union has become more powerful since it is self sufficient in this respect, while Japan has grown considerably weaker, since it is completely lacking in oil deposits."<sup>45</sup> One might argue that the disparity in the relative power of these nations could not be based mainly on the possession or non possession of oil.<sup>46</sup> However in the case of Nigeria in

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Multinational Corporations (Westpoint, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, and Co., 1978.).

<sup>43</sup>The Abubakar regime refused to expand economic relations with the Eastern Europe in order not to antagonize the West.

<sup>44</sup>Hans Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 426.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Other elements of national power including Geography,

the 1970s, oil afforded it a great capability for a more dynamic African policy. Hence it was able to reduce its reliance on foreign aid. This was reflected on the 1970/74 Development plan which anticipated only about 20 percent of total investment from foreign sources.<sup>47</sup>

It became very significant that Nigeria could effectively utilize its oil as a weapon in matters pertaining to colonialism and apartheid in Southern Africa. This is because need, like capability, determines the effectiveness of acts of influence or the quality of responsiveness. Since the industrial countries have not yet developed enough alternative sources of energy, they could not help but coax and appease the oil producing countries. Thus when Nigeria threatened to apply drastic action against British interests in Nigeria if Britain decided to resume arms sales to South Africa or if she compromised with Ian Smith of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in his bid to suppress majority rule in Zimbabwe,<sup>48</sup> she (Britain) had no other choice but to acquiesce to Nigerian demands.

In 1979, Nigeria flexed its economic muscles by nationalizing British Petroleum's assets due to its alleged export

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quality and quantity of armed forces, population, national character, and quality of diplomacy, play a very useful role too.

<sup>47</sup>Olaide Aluko, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

of Nigerian oil to South Africa and also as a result of the sour nature of Anglo-Nigerian relations caused by Mrs. Thatcher's initial insensitivity to the question of majority rule in Zimbabwe.<sup>49</sup> Nigeria's oil weapon also deterred the United States from lifting its sanctions on Zimbabwe before the attainment of majority rule.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Nigeria's economic capability enhanced its military preparedness and its ability to utilize the military to pursue some of its African policy objectives.<sup>51</sup> During the first republic, officers and men of the Nigerian military did not constitute an adequate force for a country that looked forward to the leadership of Africa. In addition, Nigeria did not indulge in any diversification of sources of military assistance but rather depended almost entirely on Britain.<sup>52</sup> This contributed immensely to Abubakar's refusal to train freedom fighters or accept the concept of armed liberation struggle in Southern Africa since this could be interpreted as hostility against its West European allies.

On the other hand, Abubakar's Government provided the United Nations force in the Congo in 1960 with a battalion of the Nigerian Army and also in 1964, replaced the Royal Marine

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<sup>49</sup>West Africa (August 6, 1979), p. 1394.

<sup>50</sup>Over 30 percent of the U.S. imports of crude oil comes from Nigeria. See Nigeria in the U.N. (1976), p. 35.

<sup>51</sup>Refer to page 21 of this study.

<sup>52</sup>William Gutteridge, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

Commando, a branch of the British military establishment, in helping the Tanzanian Government to contain an Army mutiny there.<sup>53</sup> Actions of this nature were carried out only on the implicit approval of the West.

However, with the civil war experience, and as a result of oil wealth, Nigeria was able to raise a large army, diversify its sources of military assistance, and accumulate large quantities of military hardware. Thus the post civil war regimes could afford to spearhead a campaign in Africa to establish an African High Command which could become a base for the struggle against white domination particularly in Southern Africa. It demonstrated its influence in Africa by voluntarily sending troops to the Republic of Guinea to help that government to repulse the Portuguese sponsored "Bay-of-Pigs style invasion of that country."<sup>54</sup> It also sent troops to the Chad Republic to help settle that country's internal crisis.<sup>55</sup> In addition it supported the liberation movements in Southern Africa and established an office in Lagos to coordinate certain aspects of the liberation activities.<sup>56</sup>

As a result of Nigeria's growing confidence, the idea of deploying Nigerian troops in Southern Africa started to

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>R.A. Akindede, "The Conduct of Nigeria's Foreign Relations." International Problems 11 (October, 1973).

<sup>55</sup>See West Africa (March 26, 1979), p. 523.

<sup>56</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1972, p. B658.



receive credibility among the Nigerian elite.<sup>57</sup> For instance one of the government leaders, Alhaji Aminu Kano suggested that Nigeria should become "the base for the struggle against white domination."<sup>58</sup> The implication of this statement is that the post civil war military establishment had reached a considerable degree of military preparedness capable of supporting Nigeria's African policies. This may be an overstatement due to Western collaboration<sup>59</sup> with racist regimes in Southern Africa to perpetuate racialism and imperialism. Western interests in Southern Africa make it imperative that any attempt to liquidate white domination particularly in South Africa and Namibia would be viewed by the Western World with the greatest concern.

Nevertheless, it is very significant to note that in quantitative and qualitative terms, a great disparity existed between the mini armed forces of the Abubakar regime and the

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<sup>57</sup>Olaide Aluko, "Civil War and Nigerian Foreign Policy," Political Quarterly 40 (April-June, 1971), p. 188.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>For generations, Western nations including the United Kingdom, U.S., West Germany and France have been intimately involved with the racist politics of Southern Africa in general and South Africa in particular. In the economic sphere for instance, the drive for exploitation and domination of millions of Africans derive from these countries who function in collaboration with the racist regimes. The U.K. is the most important source of foreign investment in South Africa, with over 1000 firms operating in the country. The U.S. ranks second with over 300 firms; West Germany ranks third, France, fourth. Other countries include Switzerland, Israel and Japan. (See Ann and Neva Seidman, South Africa and U.S. Multinational

more sophisticated forces of the post civil war regimes. The post civil war regimes were military regimes and their troops had had combat experience while fighting a gruesome war against Biafra. Secondly they possessed much greater quantity of men and arms which, to a large measure, would enhance military capability. Therefore in view of this enormous change in her military preparedness, Nigeria's African policy during the 1970s became more dynamic.

Above all, unlike the Abubakar regime, the military regimes represented an embodiment of political leadership which was willing, able and courageous to mobilize Nigeria's capabilities to achieve their African objectives. Under the military regimes, Nigeria abandoned the lukewarm approach to African problems and pursued its African policy even when it was in direct conflict with the West.

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Corporations; United Nations, Centre Against Apartheid  
(United Nations: Department of Political and Security  
Council Affairs, May 1978), "Activities of Transnational  
Corporations in South Africa," prepared by Ann Seidman and  
Neva Makgetta.

### CHAPTER III

#### NIGERIA'S POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA

There is no part of Southern Africa which had not been in recent years, the subject of violent discontent, debate, protest and conflict in general world opinion, the United Nations and various other international bodies. The major issue is the political, economic and social relations that exist between Whites and Blacks who constitute the majority in that region.

Although all of colonial Africa was characterized by extreme socio-economic inequality between the indigenous population and the colonizers, the problems were more acute in the settler colonies of Southern Africa. The white minorities who depict themselves as the bastion of culture and progress employ racial discrimination and exploitation, often with overt and covert support from the Western world to perpetuate their interests. In South Africa and Namibia, the white settlers monopolize power, while Angola and Mozambique were under the authoritarian metropolitan control of Portugal. Zimbabwe until March of this year, was under a racist minority regime.

Apart from the preservation of its sovereignty and in-

dependence, which constitute the core objective of every nation, the various Nigerian administrations (1960-1979), sought to eliminate these forms of domination in all parts of Africa. They argued that the country's independence would be at stake unless colonialism and all other forms of indignities meted to the Africa was eliminated.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the major concern of the next two chapters is to examine the country's relations with Southern Africa during the pre and post civil war era.

In order to effect a change in Southern Africa, the various Nigerian regimes attempted to mobilize their capabilities to influence not only South Africa but also its Western allies. But as indicated in the last chapter, capabilities mean very little unless they are effectively and skillfully mobilized in order to achieve an objective. In the same vein, effective mobilization depends on careful utilization of instruments of foreign policy which may include diplomatic bargaining, propaganda, clandestine actions, threats or military intervention. The extent to which the pre and post civil war regimes applied these techniques for influence purposes are discussed in the next two chapters. Elaborate attention is given to Nigeria's use of the concept of multilateral conference diplomacy which is institutionalized in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and also

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<sup>1</sup>Federal Nigeria 1:1 (1976), p. 3.

the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.).<sup>2</sup>

### Section I

#### The First Civilian Regime 1960-1966

Shortly before Nigeria became independent, two burning issues, all dealing with Africa, pervaded the international environment. One of these was the issue of French atomic tests in the Sahara, in spite of Nigeria's vehement objections,<sup>3</sup> while the other was the South African Government actions at Sharpsville in which 69 Africans peacefully demonstrating against the apartheid policy of the South African Government<sup>4</sup> were mowed down in "a hail of bullets" in cold blood by South African Police.

On March 21, 1960, seven months before Nigeria's independence, large numbers of unarmed Africans in several black suburbs near white cities, marched without their passes up to the South African police to peacefully demonstrate their opposition against the "pass" system. At a police station in Sharpsville, an industrial area near Johannesburg, a crowd estimated to be as large as 20,000 persons gathered and demanded to be arrested. The police had expected such a de-

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<sup>2</sup>The utilization of these agencies as a diplomatic technique is treated separately and extensively since the various governments regarded those organizations as indispensable instruments for the achievement of Nigeria's external policies (Federal Ministry of Information, News Release No. 1538, December 1, 1976.

<sup>3</sup>See Claude Phillips, op. cit., pp. 124-126.

<sup>4</sup>Current History 40 (February, 1961), p. 109.

monstration and had armed itself to the teeth to deal with the situation. Initially they refused to make arrests and ordered the demonstrators to disperse. When they refused to cooperate, the police closed in with armoured cars with which they surrounded the area and fired into the masses of demonstrating Africans, killing about 69 of them and wounding approximately 200.<sup>5</sup>

Reactions to the Sharpville massacre were very sharp and swift. Spokesmen for African and Asian countries were more loudly critical of the South African Government but official as well as unofficial comment was world-wide. World opinion had tried to pressure South Africa into easing its racial policies. The racist government had been condemned in the United Nations. Even the business community within South Africa had earlier urged the government, though without success, to ease restrictions on the African laborer in order to create more stable economic conditions. The Sharpville incident intensified world opposition and heightened the antagonism which all Africans feel toward the apartheid system. In Nigeria, no other African problem precipitated such widespread public indignation and unity of feeling except the French atomic experiments in the Sahara. The political parties, the news media, and various organizations were in complete agreement in their condemnation of South Africa and in their demand that after independence, Nigeria should insist on the with-

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

drawal of the South African government from the British Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>6</sup>

On April 5, 1960, a bill was passed into law in the Nigerian Parliament which urged the Balewa administration "to take appropriate steps to ban the importation of South African goods in this country."<sup>7</sup> During the same month, a motion introduced in the Northern Nigerian House of Assembly, by a private member, Mr. G.U. Ohikere, calling on the Northern Government "to urge the Federal Government to take the severest actions within its powers so as to bring an end to the present racial segregation and inhuman treatment of our fellow Africans in South Africa,"<sup>8</sup> was unanimously accepted. Also, in expressing his indignation at the Sharpville Massacre, the Premier of Northern Nigeria had earlier announced the termination of the services of white South Africans in Northern Nigeria as a reflection of his opposition to South Africa's policy of apartheid.<sup>9</sup>

With the widespread antagonism toward South Africa, it could easily be surmised that all politically interested Nigerians had a clear idea of the role the country was supposed

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<sup>6</sup>The (British) Commonwealth of Nations is an Association of self governing autonomous, more or less loosely associated countries in a common alliance (as to the British Crown).

<sup>7</sup>House of Representatives (H.R.) Debates, March-May Session, 1960, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup>Nigeria Citizen (April 16, 1960).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

to play in the fight against colonialism. One member of Parliament vividly portrayed the role when he said, "God made us all equal and Nigeria by her size and position on the continent of Africa should not and must not move unconcerned while our brothers are being maltreated."<sup>10</sup>

Vocal condemnations of South Africa also came from the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar. Even before the killings in Sharpville, the Prime Minister had expressed his displeasure at South Africa's membership in the British Commonwealth because of its racist policies.<sup>11</sup> In a similar move, Dr. Azikiwe made it clear during his inaugural address as Governor General that Nigeria would view an attempt by any country such as South Africa to indulge in racial prejudice as "a mark of disrespect and an unfriendly act."<sup>12</sup>

In practical terms, the Balewa Administration was able to identify with the general view of most enlightened Nigerians that no matter how racial discrimination might be camouflaged by the South African regime, it would not remain unchallenged. Therefore it did not come as a surprise that in the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference held in March 1961, Sir Abubakar, became instrumental to South Africa's expulsion from the Commonwealth.<sup>13</sup> He refused to identify himself with the

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<sup>10</sup>H.R. Debates (April 5, 1960), Col 667.

<sup>11</sup>H.R. Debates (January, 1960), p. 90.

<sup>12</sup>Federal Nigeria (November-December, 1960), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>West Africa Pilot (March 20, 1961).



pro South African position taken by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan and Robert Menzies of Australia.<sup>14</sup> Although the Prime Minister's statement on the South African issue more or less showed more concern for the Commonwealth, it was assumed that South Africa's expulsion was mainly due to the Prime Minister's stance. He declared:

We Nigerians attached great importance to the Commonwealth which embraces people of all races, colour and creed. This being so, it is incumbent upon every member nation to respect fundamental human rights or equality of individuals irrespective of race or colour or skin. The best course, therefore, for any member who feels she cannot accept this basic principle is to quit the club. South Africa's exit from the Commonwealth will save this great family of nations embarrassment. I consider it is a blessing in disguise. Rather than disintegrate the Commonwealth without South Africa will continue to grow from strength to strength.<sup>15</sup>

Sir Abubakar's role at the conference was widely applauded by the Nigerian press who thought he demonstrated, "a masterpiece of statemanship."<sup>16</sup> South Africa's expulsion might not have solved the problem of apartheid as the Prime Minister later admitted.<sup>17</sup> However the Nigerians felt that it was the beginning of attacks that could eventually lead to the collapse of the apartheid government.

As a follow-up of Nigeria's opposition to South African policy, the Nigerian Minister of Labor, Mr. J.M. Johnson, at

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<sup>14</sup>J.D.B. Miller, "South Africa's Departure," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies 1 (1961-63), p. 56.

<sup>15</sup>West Africa (March 18, 1961), p. 305.

<sup>16</sup>Daily Express (March 19, 1961), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

the Geneva meeting of the International Labor Organization (ILO), held in June 1961 submitted a resolution that South Africa be asked to quit the Organization on the grounds that its apartheid policy in labor matters was a violation of the principles of the Organization. The resolution specifically called on the I.L.O. Conference to (1) Condemn the racial policies of the government of South Africa. (2) Declare that the continued membership of the government of South Africa in the I.L.O. was not in the best interests of the Organization, and (3) Resolve that the governing body of the I.L.O. shall call upon the government of South Africa to withdraw from membership of the organization. The motion carried by 163 votes to 0, with 89 abstentions.<sup>18</sup>

In another development in November 1961, the Nigerian Foreign Minister Mr. Jaja Wachukwu was found at the forefront of the United Nations censure of South Africa. The Foreign Minister drafted a resolution, endorsed by twenty-five states, which successfully imposed the United Nations censure upon that Republic. Addressing the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly in this regard, Mr. Wachukwu remarked, "The independence of certain African states would be meaningless if in other parts of Africa black men did not have freedom. The independence movement in Africa as a whole would be a failure if black men anywhere in the world continued to

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<sup>18</sup>Daily Express (July 1, 1961). The abstainers were delegates from United States, Western Europe, Australia and Canada. See Claude Phillips, op. cit., p. 120.

be oppressed and to be judged not by their capabilities but by the colour of their skins."<sup>19</sup> Upon his return to Nigeria, he declared in Parliament,

It was at our suggestion at the United Nations that the Security Council was asked to consider applying the provisions of article 6 of the United Nations Charter, which says that when a member continues to disobey or infringe the charter of the organization, then the possibility of such member's expulsion must be considered under article 6 of the charter. We, in conjunction with other African states, brought this resolution to the Political Committee and it was passed. Now we want the Security Council to consider the possibility of expelling South Africa from the United Nations under article 6.<sup>20</sup>

In that same month, Nigerian Minister of Internal Affairs Alhaji Usman Sarki, decided to expel the South African Dutch Reformed Church from Nigeria because of its identification with apartheid.<sup>21</sup>

Still in the November Session of the House of Parliament, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Dr. T.O. Elias tabled a motion, asking for the withdrawal of Commonwealth privileges from South African nationals in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> The motion, which carried unanimously, made it imperative that henceforth, all South African nationals in Nigeria would be treated as foreigners. What all these actions indicate is that

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<sup>19</sup>A/SPC/L.71 and Corr. 1 and Add. 1-4, L.72/Rev.1.

<sup>20</sup>H.R. Debates (November, 1961), p. 14.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>H.R. Debates (November, 1961 Session), p. 14 Gordon Idang, Nigeria: International Politics and Foreign Policy,

the Balewa Administration dogged South Africa's footsteps as long as it refused to abandon its policies. Not only did the administration stand opposed to South Africa's racial policies, it also opposed her policy toward Namibia. Therefore, not suprisingly, Nigeria joined other independent African countries in encouraging Ethiopia and Liberia in 1960 to bring the case of Namibia before the International Court of Justice.<sup>23</sup>

Portuguese failure to decolonize Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau met also with charged emotions and an immense degree of criticism throughout Nigeria. From the beginning of the rebellion by African nationalists, caused by the repressive measure adopted against the colonized peoples of these countries, there was unanimous condemnation of Portuguese actions in the Nigerian press. Security Council debates on the issue of decolonization were religiously reported, and there were several editorial comments on the failure of Great Britain to vote for the Afro-Asian motion in the U.N. calling on Portugal to end "repressive measures" while on the other hand, the United States was praised for its favorable vote.<sup>24</sup> More objections arose when a British frigate paid a courtesy call

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1960-1966 Ibadan University Press: September, 1973). Phillips, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>23</sup>Ituen Bassey, "Nigeria's Foreign Relations: A Study of the Factors Influencing Nigeria's Foreign Relations After Independence," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Graduate School of St. Louis University, Missouri, 1970, p. 272.

<sup>24</sup>L. Gray Cowan, "Nigerian Foreign Policy," in Robert Tilman and Taylor Cole (eds.), *The Nigerian Political Scene*

to Angola during that time and also on the basis of a rumour that Kano airport was being used as a staging post to fly in Portuguese reinforcements to the Portuguese territories.<sup>25</sup>

In November 1961, Nigeria co-sponsored a resolution in the United Nations Assembly which rebuffed "the policy and practice of racial discrimination and segregation in non-self governing territories. It also joined Ghana that year to warn Portugal of the independent African states' determination to eliminate all forms of colonialism and imperialism on the African continent."<sup>26</sup> The Prime Minister took practical steps in this regard by officially according recognition to the Angola Government-in-exile led by Holden Roberto.<sup>27</sup>

Earlier, Abubakar's regime had aided refugees and had given bi-lateral assistance in the form of cash grants, scholarships for secondary, technical or University education and training facilities for vocational and technical training to bona fide national liberation movements in the territories still under colonial rule.<sup>28</sup>

To further demonstrate its determination to challenge

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(Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1962), p. 136.

<sup>25</sup>John Mackintosh, et. al., Nigerian Government and Politics (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 274.

<sup>26</sup>Gordon Idang, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>27</sup>H.R. Debates, April 4, 1961, Col. 1682.

<sup>28</sup>Gordon Idang, op. cit., p. 127.

Southern African racist regimes, Nigeria participated in the deliberations of a committee on sanction against South Africa, held in London in April, 1963. Nigeria not only endorsed the resolutions reached by the conference but also adopted effective measures to uphold the recommendations of trade boycotts and campaigns to force South Africa and Portugal out of the subsidiary organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations.<sup>29</sup>

The situation in Zimbabwe, to some extent, received the sustained attention of the Balewa Administration because of its (Rhodesia's) position as the Northern bastion of the white dominated subcontinent of Africa. Its constitution of December 6, 1961, which had eliminated most of the residual powers formerly held by Britain, while holding only the most tenuous of promises for any meaningful black participation in government remained the constituent document of the territory until its unilateral declaration of Independence in 1965. Not even the U.N. since 1962 had been able to get Britain to take immediate steps to set aside the 1961 constitution, in order to restore civil liberties or repeal all Rhodesian laws which sanctioned racial discrimination.

Blacks, both without and within the Rhodesian colony had demanded from Britain a transition from the racialist minority government to majority rule and only after that, independence for the colony. But without waiting for power to be con-

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

stitutionally transferred, not taking steps to effect a gradual constitutional advance toward democracy or majority rule, Mr. Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence in November 1965.

Earlier, the Nigerian foreign Minister had assured the Nigerian Parliament that Nigeria "will not be favorably disposed towards any attempt to transfer power to a minority population in Zimbabwe particularly when it comes to matters of independence."<sup>30</sup> Sir Abubakar himself was reported to have angrily warned: "anybody who rebels should be dealt with savagely. A rebellion is a rebellion and you cannot put it down by sanctions alone...other measures must be applied as well."<sup>31</sup> These strongly worded statements raised the speculation that Nigeria might opt for the use of force to crush Ian Smith's rebellion. However it never followed through its threats because of its justification that punitive measures against Britain in retaliation for her acquiescence to Zimbabwe's U.D.I. would have far reaching negative implications for Nigeria. Instead, the Prime Minister proposed a Commonwealth Conference on the Zimbabwean situation in Lagos in January 1966, only a few days before the January 15 military coup in which he was killed. It was the first time the Commonwealth of Nations ever held a conference outside London. The only achievement of the Conference was the creation of the Sanctions Committee that would work out details of sanctions

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<sup>30</sup>H.R. Debates, April 6, 1964, Col 1832.

<sup>31</sup>West Africa (December 11, 1965).

against Zimbabwe. However that Committee never proved effective.<sup>32</sup>

## Section II

### International Agencies and Nigeria's Policy Towards Southern Africa: The U.N. and the O.A.U. 1960-1966

An analysis of Nigeria's performance in international organizations provides additional insight into the nation's policy toward Southern Africa. Although organizations like the U.N. and the O.A.U. cannot serve as sole generators of pressures for issues such as anti-apartheidism or decolonization in Southern Africa, they provide a forum where Nigeria can explain her position on such issues.

#### The United Nations

Nigeria's activities in the U.N. including the introduction of draft resolutions and its voting records are indications of its efforts to use its capabilities to weaken the position of the racist regimes of Southern Africa.

In this section, roll-call votes on Southern African issues taken during the fifteenth to the twentieth plenary sessions (1960-1966) of the General Assembly have been considered. However in some instances where roll-call votes were in committee or where committee vote reflected an issue not discussed in the plenary session, the committed vote was con-

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<sup>32</sup>James Barbar, "The Impact of the Rhodesian Crisis On the Commonwealth," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies 7:2 (1969), p. 89.



sidered.

During its first decade the U.N. was dominated by the Western powers and hence the problem which came before it were structured and defined in terms of Western interest. However the increase of membership in the 1960's by Afro Asian nations (including Nigeria), who were generally ex-colonial and non-white brought with it a new focus geared towards speedy extermination of the remaining bastions of European colonialism and racialism in Southern Africa.

The fifteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations held in 1960, marked an epoch in the history of the Organization. During this session alone, seventeen new members joined the U.N., sixteen of which were from Africa, whereas in the first ten years of its birth, only ten new nations joined. The impact of their entry reflected the increased amount of time devoted to the discussion of colonial issues, most of which centered on South Africa, S. West Africa (Namibia), Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In 1960, the colonial issues that featured most prominently in the U.N. were the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa and the question of Namibia.

#### South Africa

The question of South Africa's racial policies were considered by the U.N. Security Council between March 30 and April 1, 1960 at the request of Afro Asian countries including Nigeria, in the aftermath of the violent incident at Sharpville.

The Security Council adopted by a vote of 9 to 0, with 2 abstentions, a resolution emphasizing that the South African situation, "if continued might endanger international security." It deplored the Sharpsville incident and called upon South Africa "to initiate measures aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality." The resolution also requested the U.N. Secretary General "in consultation with the Union of South Africa, to make such arrangements as would adequately help in upholding the purposes and principles of the character and report to the Security Council whenever necessary and appropriate."<sup>33</sup>

Nigeria was one of the ninety three countries to vote in favor of a draft resolution introduced on April 13, 1961, by India, Ceylon, Malaya and the United Arab Republic which "deprecatd policies based on racial discrimination as reprehensible and repugnant to human dignity; affirmed that the racial policies pursued by the Union of South Africa were a flagrant violation of the charter of the U.N. and Declaration of Human Rights and inconsistent with the obligations of member states." The draft resolution called on the Government of South Africa "to bring its policies and conduct into conformity with its obligations under the charter."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>U.S. Participation in the U.N., Report on the United Nations, 1960 (Dept. of State Publication 7341, March, 1962), pp. 75-76.

<sup>34</sup>U.N. Resolution, 1958 (XV), 981st Plenary Meeting, April 13, 1961.

Further evidence of the Nigerian intentions towards South Africa came in the Fall of 1961, when as indicated earlier, the Nigerian Foreign Minister. Mr. Jaja Wachukwu introduced a resolution signed by twenty five African states which successfully brought the United Nation's censure on South Africa.

Another move against South Africa was made on August 14, 1962. Forty eight Afro Asian countries including Nigeria requested that the following items be included on the agenda of the General Assembly. (1) Race Conflict in South Africa, and (2) Treatment of the people of India and Indo-Pakistan origin in the Republic of South Africa. On September 19, 1962, the General Assembly agreed to include these items on its agenda over the objection of the South African Government which claimed that deliberation on such matters contravened the terms of article 2 (7) of the United Nations charter on domestic jurisdiction.<sup>35</sup> Although the inclusion of such items never yielded a change of attitude from South Africa, it was a reminder to that Government that as long as it clung to its policies of apartheid, it was treading on dangerous ground.

During most of 1963, South Africa's racist policies were under consideration in both the plenary General Assembly and in the Security Council. Nigeria was one of thirty two African states who, in a letter dated July 11, 1963, asked

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<sup>35</sup>U.N. General Assembly Official Records, Plenary Meetings, 17th Session 2 (1962).

the Security Council "to consider the explosive situation existing in South Africa, which constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security." The letter was the product of a Summit Conference of Independent African states held in Addis Ababa in May, 1963.

Earlier, in a letter to the President of the Security Council dated May 6, 1963, the Special Committee on Apartheid (Nigeria was a member),<sup>36</sup> indicated that the committee "considers it highly desirable" that the Council should recognize the "grave situation in South Africa as a result of its policies. Therefore in August 1963, the Security Council adopted a resolution, "calling on South Africa to liberate political prisoners who were held under arbitrary laws. In the plenary session, Nigeria was one of the 106 members who voted to condemn South Africa for its failure to heed past U.N. resolutions; requested South Africa to abandon the arbitrary trial and "grant unconditional release" to all prisoners; requested member states to induce South Africa to comply immediately and asked the Secretary General to report as soon as possible on implementation. (A/Res. 1881 (XVIII))

Again in March 1964, the Apartheid Committee which included Nigeria submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly, several reports on the developments in South

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<sup>36</sup>Other members of the Apartheid Committee were Algeria, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Malaya, Nepal, Phillipines and Somalia.

Africa. One of the reports issued on March 23, dealt with the "repressive measures against the opponents of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa. Its annual reports issued in November, called for a wide range of economic sanctions against South Africa including individual embargoes on rubber, chemicals, gold, diamond and Iron ore.

#### South West Africa (Namibia)

Sir Abubakar's regime as already indicated voiced out its opposition to South Africa's colonial policies in Namibia. Like his South African policy, the Prime Minister equally utilized the United Nations as a forum to demonstrate its opposition to South Africa's presence in Namibia.

In November 1960, Nigeria, in concert with Ghana and Sudan, introduced a draft resolution in the General Assembly expressing its concern that the administration of Namibia had been maintained "in a manner contrary to the mandate, the charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Resolution of the General Assembly, including resolution 449 A (V) of December 1950, by which the General Assembly accepted the advisory opinion of July 11, 1950 of the International Court of Justice concerning South Africa." Unwillingness to comply with the 1950 decision of the International Court of Justice (U.N. Official Records A/C 4/L. 652), Ethiopia and Liberia, on November 4 had filed Concurrent Applications in the International Court of Justice instituting "contentious proceedings against the Union of

South Africa."<sup>37</sup> Through the efforts of these countries including Nigeria, the General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted by a vote of 86 to 0, with 6 abstentions, a resolution noting and commending the legal action taken by the Governments of Ethiopia and Liberia.

Other resolutions adopted by the world body criticized the application by South Africa in Namibia, of the policy of apartheid, and also expressed deep regret over the wanton massacre of a number of indigenous inhabitants of Namibia and their forcible removal from Windhoek-their capital. The U.N. also urged the South African Government to cease the arbitrary imprisonment and deportation of political leaders of the Territory.<sup>38</sup>

In the spring of 1961, Nigeria voted to endorse two resolutions on Namibia adopted at the resumed 15th General Assembly. One of these resolutions 1593 (XV), appealed to all members of the U.N. who have "close and continuous" relations with the South African Government to exert their influence on that Government in order that it would conduct itself in a manner conducive to its charter obligations and equally adjust its policies to the General Assembly's resolutions. The other resolution, 159 (XV), noted with regret that South Africa had refused to cooperate with the Committee on Namibia and re-

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<sup>37</sup>U.N. Monthly Chronicle 1:1 (May, 1964), p. 43.

<sup>38</sup>General Assembly Official Records, A/C.4/L. 654; A/C.4/L. 653.

requested the committee to proceed with its investigation with or without such cooperation. Apparently, the investigations were completed in Cairo and Dar-es-Salaam without any cooperation from the South African Government-which refused to admit the Committee to Namibia. On submission of its reports to the General Assembly, South Africa's actions were condemned as a danger to international peace and security.

In the General Assembly meeting held on September 20, 1963, several representatives including those from Nigeria condemned the continuing support of South Africa by certain powers or certain financial groups which they claimed, encouraged South Africa to persist in its attitude. Nigeria was one of the countries in the same session of the General Assembly which adopted a resolution urging all states to refrain from (a) Supplying arms or military equipment to South Africa (b) Supplying South Africa with petroleum or petroleum products, and (c) Any action to hamper implementation of U.N. resolutions A/Res. 1899 (XVIII).

Most of the deliberations on Namibia in 1964 were done on Special Committees and Nigeria's role in those committees was minimal. In 1965, the United Nations more or less was occupied with the threat posed to international peace by Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. As usual, Nigeria used the U.N. as a platform to demonstrate its foreign policy stance toward that country.

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe has also received a sustained attention of the United Nations. From 1953 until 1963, this country, manipulated by whites as in South Africa, was part of an uneasy federation with Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi). However, the British-created federation disintegrated in 1963 partly due to Zimbabwean (then Southern Rhodesia) anachronistic racial policies. Subsequently Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) reassumed the status of a self governing, but a dependent British colony, with a constitution which denied civil liberties to Rhodesian Blacks. This situation continuously attracted international outrage.

On October 23, 1962, fifty one African and Asian U.N. members including Nigeria introduced a draft resolution in the Fourth Committee of the U.N. stating that any attempt by Zimbabwe to impose its racist constitution will aggravate the existing explosive situation in that territory. The resolution urged the United Kingdom to suspend the unpopular constitution and work toward the formulation of a new Zimbabwean constitution. The resolution was adopted by the Fourth Committee on October 31 by a vote of 81 to 2, with 17 abstentions.<sup>39</sup>

A roll-call vote was taken on a draft resolution submitted by forty five Afro-Asian states including Nigeria on October 18, 1963. This resolution noted "the continued denial

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<sup>39</sup>AC./4/L. 753, October 31, 1962.



to the vast majority of the African population of their basic political rights" in Zimbabwe. It was also mindful of the request of "the settler minority government" for independence. It therefore called on the United Kingdom not to yield to the request until majority rule was established. This resolution was approved in the Plenary Session by a vote of 78 in favor, 2 against and 19 abstentions.<sup>40</sup> Nigeria voted in favor of this resolution.

In the early part of 1965, there were some indications that the minority regime in Zimbabwe would, in actuality seize independence from Britain unilaterally. In view of such a threat, forty five Afro Asian states submitted a resolution in the General Assembly condemning any attempt by the regime to carry out such an action. Nigeria was one of the sponsors of this resolution (General Resolution 2012 (XX), October 12, 1965).

Almost simultaneously, thirty six African states including Nigeria drafted a resolution in the General Assembly calling on Britain "to employ all necessary measures, including military force" to prevent an illegal Declaration of Independence.<sup>41</sup> However on November 11, 1965, the Minority regime obstinately declared Rhodesia independent. In reaction to this, the General Assembly almost unanimously voted to condemn the Zimbabwean action. The African resolution was thus

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<sup>40</sup>A/Res. 1889 (XVIII), October 18, 1963.

<sup>41</sup>G.A. Res. 2024 (XX), November 11, 1965.

passed by a vote of 107 in favor, 2 against, and 1 abstaining (General Assembly Resolution 2024 (XX), November 11, 1965.

On the same day that the General Assembly adopted the African resolution, 57 African and Asian states requested the Security Council to consider the situation in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) brought about by the unilateral declaration of independence of the Smith government. The Council President Mr. Ortiz-Sanz of Bolivia, convened the Security Council on the morning of November 12, 1965. In response to the requests of the Afro-Asian states, Representatives of Algeria, India, Pakistan, Ghana, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali, Tanzania, Guinea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Gambia, Jamaica, Somalia, Sudan and Nigeria were invited to participate without the right to vote. It was in this meeting that the Representative of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African states accused Britain of its readiness to order its troops to shoot colonial subjects when their skin was black or brown but not when their skin was white. This accusation was in response to Britain's refusal to use force to crush Ian Smith's rebellion. The Security Council adopted a resolution, calling upon all states "to refrain from any action which would assist the regime, to desist from providing it with arms, equipment, and military material and to their utmost, to break all economic relations with Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) including the institution of an embargo on oil and oil products."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Security Council Res. 216 (1965), November 12, 1965; and 217 (1965), November 20, 1965.

Angola and Mozambique

The atrocities being committed by Portugal in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau came to the attention of the United Nations in 1961. This was as a result of numerous reports of wanton massacre of dozens of Africans demonstrating in Angola against Portuguese brutalities. The demonstrations attacked a Portuguese prison in Luanda, the capital of Angola to protest what was described as "frightful crimes committed under the cloak of civilization." Reports of arbitrary imprisonment and torture of African leaders in those colonies were rampant. Therefore there were spontaneous revolts by the Africans from time to time. But these revolts were repulsed by the Portuguese troops in a most brutal manner. However the incident of February 4, 1961 was saddled with disquieting atrocities perpetrated by the Portuguese armoured troops. Dozens of people were brutally murdered and hundreds, wounded.<sup>43</sup> Again, on March 15, 1961, widespread disorders broke out in Northern Angola with the panic stricken population, fleeing into the forests, as the Portuguese troops were burning villages and decimating the inhabitants.<sup>44</sup>

In view of the gravity of the situation, a Nigerian delegation, along with representatives of 45 Afro-Asian countries, inscribed in the General Assembly's agenda, an item

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<sup>43</sup>990th Plenary Session, Item 92, April 20, 1961.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

entitled, "The situation in Angola."<sup>45</sup> These countries spoke in the General Assembly condemning Portugal for its refusal to implement reforms in its colonies, looking toward self determination. In his address to the General Assembly, the Nigerian representative declared,

If there was need to condemn any country in the strongest terms possible, this is the time to do so in respect of Portugal....We have also declared in no uncertain terms that the United Nations accept the principle of self determination for all peoples, irrespective of race, colour or creed and that all are equally entitled to strive for independence from foreign domination and to enjoy unlimited sovereignty within their territorial boundaries. The Portuguese doctrine of Assimilation is one that cannot be sustained, just as the doctrine of Angola's being a part of Portugal based as it is on a legal fiction, must collapse. For this is no more than semantic camouflage of the worst colonial system still in existence today on the African continent.<sup>46</sup>

In a vote of 73 to 2, Portugal was urged by the U.N. General Assembly to cooperate with the U.N. and implement reform with a view to granting autonomy to its territories. (A./L. 345 and Add. 1-5)

In 1963, Nigeria, along with 65 other nations introduced a draft resolution which (a) recalled the Security Council resolution of July 1963, asking for the end of repression in the Portuguese territories and immediate steps to independence. It also requested the Security Council to take up the question

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<sup>45</sup>A/L. 345 and Add. 1-5, 1961.

<sup>46</sup>General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, 109th Plenary Session, January 17, 1962.

and "adopt necessary measures to give effect to its own decisions." This was approved in Plenary Session by 91 votes in favor, 2 against and 11 abstentions. (A/Res. 1913 (XVIII), 1963.

The Security Council on the request of the O.A.U. of which Nigeria is a member in turn discussed the question of the Portuguese territories on November 4, 1965 and approved a resolution that (a) reaffirmed the rights of all peoples to self determination (b) urged amnesty for all political prisoners in the Portuguese territories and (c) called on all states to refrain from equipping Portugal with arms that could be employed in representing dependent territories.<sup>47</sup>

Quantitatively, within the period between October 1, 1960 (Nigeria's day of independence) and January 15, 1966 (the end of the first Republic), 120 anti apartheid and colonial draft resolutions were introduced in the United Nations by member nations. Out of this number, Nigeria sponsored or co-sponsored a total of 41. Also out of a total number of 69 votes taken in the Plenary meetings, General Assembly and Special Political Committees, Nigeria voted 60 times to condemn Southern African colonialism and apartheidism.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>U.N. Monthly Chronicle 2:10 (November, 1965), pp. 35 37.

<sup>48</sup>Summary of resolution and votes is adopted from United Nations Year Book, 1960-66; U.N. General Assembly Official Records-Plenary Meeting; Special Political Committee Meeting (United Nations, New York, 1960-1966; U.N. Monthly

The O.A.U.

One of the aims of the O.A.U. which incidentally coincided with part of Nigeria's African policy is the total eradication of racialism, colonialism and imperialism from Africa. Therefore the Balewa administration tried not to equivocate in utilizing the O.A.U. as a medium for its foreign policy formulations towards Southern Africa.

On the basis of an invitation from the Nigerian government, the O.A.U. Council of Ministers met on February 24, 1964, in an Ordinary Session in Lagos (Nigeria), to discuss among other things, issues concerning Southern Africa. In a decision reached by the Council of Ministers during the six-day conference, member states were urged to deny the use of their ports and overflying rights and other facilities to ships and aircrafts proceeding to or returning from South Africa. The Conference also submitted a resolution to the next Heads of States Conference condemning the South African government whose policy, "constitutes a grave danger to the stability and peace of Africa and the world." (West African Pilot, March 2, 1964)

On Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), the Council noted the "explosive situation" that was incumbent on the country's political atmosphere. It called on the British Government to prevent the threat of a unilateral independence or a "subtle

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Chronicle.

assumption of power by the minority regime in Southern Rhodesia. The Council of Ministers urged Britain to convene a fully representative Constitutional Conference of all political parties in Zimbabwe to decide on immediate independence on the basis of "one man, one vote."<sup>49</sup> Mr. Jonas M. Savimbi, the Foreign Minister of the Angola Provisional Government led by Mr. Holden Roberto was admitted for the first time to the O.A.U. Conference of Foreign Ministers.<sup>50</sup>

Nigerian Prime Minister attended the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government which was held in Cairo from July 17 to 21. In this particular Conference, the delegates adopted with acclamation, resolutions on Southern Africa including the Republic of South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Portuguese territories.

On South Africa, the Heads of State including the Nigerian Prime Minister, reiterated the call made by the Council of Ministers for the cooperation of all countries and particularly the major trading partners in the economic boycott of South Africa. They also appealed to all the oil producing countries to cease, as a matter of urgency, their supply of oil products to South Africa. Moreover the Heads of State called for the release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Mangaliso Sobukwe and all other Africans imprisoned by South

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<sup>49</sup>West African Pilot (March 2, 1964).

<sup>50</sup>Nigerian Morning Post (February 26, 1964).

Africa because of their opposition to that regime's apartheid policies.

As regards Zimbabwe, the Assembly vowed "to take vigorous and immediate step" against any U.D.I. by the white minority regime. The Heads of State pledged to adopt adequate measures "including the recognition and support of an African Nationalist Government-in-Exile if there arose such an eventuality. They also repeated the call made by the Council of Ministers in Britain to take immediate measures to prepare a new constitution that ensured majority rule in Rhodesia. In conclusion, they asked for the immediate release of Dr. Joshua Nkomo, Reverend Ndabinongo Sithole and all other political prisoners and detainees.<sup>51</sup>

The African leaders condemned Portugal for its "persistent refusal to recognize the rights of the people under its domination to self determination and independence and for its non-compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security and General Assembly." They decided to establish a bureau within the O.A.U. General Secretariat with assigned duties which included: (1) Coordination between member states of the strictest implementation of the resolutions of the O.A.U. and (2) Harmonization of co-operation with friendly states as to implement an effective boycott against Portugal.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Africa Research Bulletin 1 (July 1-31, 1964), p. 107.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.



Commenting on the resolution of the African leaders at the conference, Sir Abubakar expressed the hope that all African states would assist in the speedy liberation of Southern Africa by making contributions to a special fund established by the O.A.U. to supply assistance to various African Liberation Movements. He declared, "South Africa and Portugal have become the Black sheep of the International Community."<sup>53</sup>

Further resolutions on Southern Africa were made in various conferences of African Heads of State and Council of Ministers in 1965. In one of such conferences held in Accra Ghana, the "Committee of Five" otherwise called O.A.U. Defense Committee was formed. This Committee which was composed of representatives from the U.A.R., Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria was given the responsibility of following up conference resolutions.

In the Accra Conference, which lasted from October 21 to 26, the Heads of State and Governments, agreed in principle on certain measures to be taken in case Ian Smith declared Rhodesia Independent of Britain. These measures were: (1) Refusal to recognize such independence, (2) Efforts to reconcile the two African Nationalist parties in Rhodesia—the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), with a view to forming a

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<sup>53</sup>

Ibid.

government-in-exile and extending to it financial political, diplomatic and military assistance, (3) An emergency meeting of the O.A.U. Council of Ministers to consider further action including the most effective means of involving the United Nations.<sup>54</sup> The Assembly recommended that member states should reconsider their political, economic, diplomatic and financial relations with Britain if she (Britain) accepted Zimbabwe's independence on the basis of minority rule.<sup>55</sup>

On November 11, 1965, the white minority regime defied all odds and condemnations that might accompany a U.D.I. and seized power from Britain. Following this move, Nigeria convened a meeting of the Committee of Five in order to advise on what line of action to take against Ian Smith.<sup>56</sup> Although the Committee ended its deliberations without issuing a communique it convened the O.A.U. Council of Ministers to discuss the immediate steps to be taken on Rhodesia.

At the meeting of the Council of Ministers, all independent African countries including Nigeria and excluding Libya which abstained, and Tunisia together with Kenya which expressed reservations, supported a decision to break relations with Britain on December 15, 1965 if it failed to crush the rebellion.<sup>57</sup> Certain members, Sierra Leone in particular,

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Africa Research Bulletin (October 1-31, 1965), p. 378.

<sup>56</sup>R.C. Pratt, "Africa's Reaction to the Rhodesian Crisis," International Journal (Toronto) 21:2 (1966) p. 193.

wanted member states to withdraw from the Commonwealth. However, Nigeria which played a leading role during the conference later developed cold feet in its implementation of the resolutions. When the Nigerian Minister of External Affairs was asked on his return from the O.A.U. Council, if Nigeria would leave the Commonwealth, he replied, "There was no question of leaving the Commonwealth; we did not discuss this. What we said is that we will sever diplomatic relations if our ultimatum is not respected."<sup>58</sup>

What in fact happened was that only eight states excluding Nigeria broke off diplomatic relations with Britain, while no single country withdrew from the Commonwealth.<sup>59</sup> This failure to achieve African unanimity in practice posed a grave threat to African solidarity and also exposed the O.A.U. to danger and decay. Attempts to hold further summits on Zimbabwe were abandoned since only seventeen countries agreed to participate. Nigeria gave no firm commitment to participating in such a conference.

Now that details of the foreign policy initiative of the Balewa regime have been presented we may proceed to analyze them with a view to determining the extent to which they were commensurate with the capabilities available to Nigeria

Despite Sir Abubakar's policy of anti colonialism, it has usually been said by enlightened Nigerians that his

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<sup>58</sup>Radio Nigeria, Lagos, December 6, 1965.

<sup>59</sup>R.C. Pratt, "Africa's Reaction to the Rhodesia Crisis,"

Southern African policy was not sufficiently dynamic. Although there were indications that his administration at times identified with racial elements in matters relating to Southern Africa, its overall Southern African policy was merely in form of gestures that were little more than symbolic in that no one expected them to yield the desired change of attitude on the part of racist governments in Southern Africa. Criticism of this nature often arise because of various contradictions in Sir Abubakar's policies. For instance despite all its verbal battles against Portuguese colonialism, the Abubakar regime continued to allow Portugal to have a Charge d'Affairs in Nigeria while other African countries refused to do so.<sup>60</sup> It was only after much persistent domestic pressures and criticisms that Sir Abubakar grudgingly withdrew recognition from the Portuguese Mission early in 1964.<sup>61</sup>

The Balewa Administration refused to train freedom fighters or accept the concept of an armed liberation struggle in Southern Africa as some leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere did.<sup>62</sup> A practical example of the government's general attitude occurred in April 1962, when Mr. Holden Roberto, then the Head of the Angolan government-in-exile came to Lagos to seek military aid. Despite his much orchestrated recognition

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International Journal (Toronto) 2:2 (1966), p. 193.

<sup>60</sup>H.R. Debates, April 6, 1964, Col. 1799.

<sup>61</sup>West Africa (Januray 25, 1964), p. 103.

<sup>62</sup>R.A. Akindele, "The Conduct of Nigeria's Foreign

of Mr. Roberto's Government-in exile, the Prime Minister said, "We cannot assure you of training you to fight your African brothers in the South."<sup>63</sup> This is far from the truth since the main target of the nationalists at the time was Portuguese colonialism. Sir Abubakar was rather looking for an alibi to deny military assistance to the Angolan nationalists.

The most glaring contradiction occurred when in the form of a resolution in the Parliament, the Abubakar Government asked that:

This House call on the Government to send a message of goodwill through the proper channel to the Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of Great Britain for his tour of Africa and his statement against the attitude of the Government of South Africa towards the race problems of that country.<sup>64</sup>

This was an indication that Sir Abubakar still believed in the infallibility of Britain but never believed that Britain had always been part of the problem in Southern Africa. Thus his close link with Britain remained a factor responsible for his inconsistency and lack of coherence in Nigeria's attitude toward Southern Africa.

In addition, it is significant to note that the Abubakar administration failed to implement the resolution on the boycott of South African goods. Despite the resolution on April 5, 1960, to ban South African goods, Nigeria increased

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Relations," International Problems 12(October, 1973), p. 54.

<sup>63</sup> Claude Phillips, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>64</sup> Daily Sketch (March 23, 1972), p. 8.

her imports from South Africa from 1,006,938 pounds sterling to 1,018,550 pounds while reducing her exports from 49,506 to 7,970 pounds sterling.<sup>65</sup> What these figures actually indicate is that despite the ban, South Africa had a favorable balance of trade over Nigeria. Therefore ironically, the ban was on Nigerian goods in South Africa.

These aspects of Sir Abubakar's Southern African policy were consistent with his insistence that Nigeria's increasing commitments to Africa should not lead to a disruption of her relations with and commitments to the Western powers who incidentally, are deeply involved in Southern Africa. The Prime Minister made it plain that:

Our national interest cannot best be served by a severance of pre-independence ties which raminate (sic) into several aspects of our national life particularly in the fields of trade, investments, aid, technical assistance, monetary relations, education and manpower development.<sup>66</sup>

In other words, the prime Minister was not prepared to pursue any firm anti-colonial and anti racist policies which would jeopardize his relations with the West. Therefore, it is quite obvious that Nigeria's economic and political stability during the Balewa administration was at the mercy of the Western nations, particularly Britain. This situation fostered a lack of independence and sufficient dynamism in that regime's

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<sup>65</sup>Nigerian Trade Summary, The Chief Statistician, Lagos December, 1960.

<sup>66</sup>Quoted from the Nigerian Bulletin on Foreign Affairs 1:1 (July 1971).

handling of the crises in Southern Africa.

Most probably, Abubakar's regime like other African governments took the initiative within the United Nations system to bring before the world body the plight of those Africans living under colonialism and apartheid, hoping thereby to build up a world opinion hostile to these practices. The feeling was that a body of international opinion hostile to these practices could bring a change in the political and economic order in Southern Africa. Thus Nigeria's votes in the U.N. during the first republic seemed impressive. However criticisms still arose because of various contradictions in Sir Abubakar's overall U.N. and O.A.U. activities in relation to Southern Africa. An outstanding incident that baffled African diplomats in the United Nations happened in 1961. Nigeria with all its verbal battles against colonialism, in October of that year, introduced a draft resolution which called for complete independence of African countries by December 1970. From the standpoint of other Afro-Asian states, only a resolution calling for immediate termination of Colonialism would have sounded diplomatically appropriate and reasonable. However the resolution was later withdrawn due to sustained hostility from these states. Nonetheless, lasting damage had been done to Nigeria's credibility as the giant of Africa.

As if Sir Abubakar refused to learn his lesson, his administration discouraged the setting of any time table for the achievement of majority rule in Rhodesia. In his last

interview before he was killed in a military coup, the Prime Minister, in response to a question about what time would be appropriate for Rhodesia's independence replied, "There must be time for Africans to be trained and to gain experience... and there must be time for the whites to get used to the idea of majority rule. What you need is to arrive at a time when both sides can say that, after all, it's not too bad."<sup>67</sup>

Another glaring contradiction was the fact that Nigeria was at the fore front of the United Nations censure of South Africa in the fall of 1961. Mr. Wachukwu, the Nigerian Foreign Minister had earlier told the Nigerian House of Representatives that Nigeria would "want the Security Council to consider the possibility of expelling South Africa from the United Nations under article 6."<sup>68</sup> But the same Foreign Minister refused to support a move by Afro Asian states to expel South Africa from the World body. Questioned about the expulsion bid on a United States T.V. program a few days before it was put to vote, Mr. Wachukwu said, "She (South Africa) may expel herself but as far as I am concerned, censure is enough for the time being if this will make them think."<sup>69</sup>

The inconsistencies in the Balewa administration's attitude towards South Africa were further exasperated by the

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<sup>67</sup>West Africa (January 29, 1966), p. 113.

<sup>68</sup>H.R. Debates (November 23, 1961), p. 14.

<sup>69</sup>Newsweek (International) (October 23, 1961) p. 29.



repudiation of Wachukwu's opposition to South Africa's expulsion by Senator Nuhu Bamali, Minister of State for External Affairs. Senator Bamali said in a press conference at Ikeja Airport, Lagos, that no matter what Mr. Wachukwu had said at the U.N., "it is the determination of the Nigerian government to pursue consistently its policy of non-fratanzation with South Africa."<sup>70</sup> The Senator contended that Foreign Minister Wachukwu's view of what action should be taken against South Africa was not that of the Federal Government. It is still impossible to reconcile the conflicting opinions of these two government spokesmen since the Prime Minister refused to clarify the official position of his administration. In the case of Zimbabwe, despite all the high sounding rhetoric by Sir Abubakar that any rebellion (by Ian Smith) would be dealt with savagely, and that Nigeria would support any resolution that would bring down Ian Smith's regime, including the use of force, his administration did not cooperate in the efforts to stop the rebellion. His refusal to break diplomatic relations with Britain, consistent with the decisions of the Council of Ministers<sup>71</sup> failed to generate confidence in the seriousness or competence of Nigeria's Southern African diplomacy.

More often than not, Abubakar spoke deeply against

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<sup>70</sup>West Africa (November 16, 1963), p. 1303.

<sup>71</sup>See Africa Research Bulletin 1 (July 1-31, 1964), p. 107.

colonialism and Apartheid in Southern Africa. Under him, Nigeria's record at the United Nations showed disgust for such practices. Yet he was cautious and pragmatic due to his inability to overcome the inherent limitation of the psychology of colonialism. Therefore his administration's external policy swung from one end to another and back, both in content and style.

Sir Abubakar's inconsistent and incoherent Southern African policy smacks of his inability to utilize Nigeria's capabilities to influence the racist regimes of Southern Africa and their mentors. It is also indicative of the perceptions the target countries had of those capabilities. Certainly these countries had a dire need for Nigeria's resources. However their need was offset by the Abubakar regimes's obsessive Western orientation which brought pressure to bear on the credibility of Nigeria's capabilities, thus limiting the degree of their responsiveness in the influence relationship.

## CHAPTER IV

### NIGERIA'S POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1967-1979

#### Section I

While Sir Abubakar's Southern African policy has been described in the last chapter as inactive, overtly inconsistent and characterized by caution and conservatism despite his anti-colonial and anti-apartheid campaign, there is an attempt in this chapter to emphasize the more assertive role played by subsequent administrations since the Nigerian civil war. In other words, the data suggest that there were substantial changes in Nigeria's Southern African relations after the end of the civil war and that the anti-colonial-anti-apartheid ideology of the post civilian regimes were far beyond the level of consciousness of the Balewa administration. These changes which were products of the civil war experience and the skillful mobilization of Nigeria's capabilities are seen as gradually escalating during General Gowon's regime and becoming more pronounced during Murtala Muhammed/Obasanjo regimes from 1975-1979.

#### The Gowon Regime (1967-1975)

The initial period of General Gowon's administration (1967-1970) was an era replete with a civil war that dominated

Nigeria's domestic and foreign policy. Except for her anti-colonial and apartheid moves in the U.N., Nigeria during that period, could not initiate new moves against Southern African racist regimes. But the experience of the civil war in creased more than ever, Nigeria's determination to eradicate racialism, colonialism and imperialism from Africa. Ian Smith's Zimbabwe, South Africa and Portugal perceived the civil war as an instrument that could be utilized in the balkanization of Nigeria which they felt, constituted a potential threat to their survival.<sup>1</sup> All three countries gave assistance and encouragement to Biafra in her efforts to secede from Nigeria. Lisbon became the headquarters of the Biafran European activities while South African and Zimbabwean pilots assisted in flying her planes.<sup>2</sup> It was further disclosed that South African infantry mercenaries fought on the Biafran side against Nigeria. The Biafran Head of State, General Ojukwu lent some credibility to these allegations when he asserted that he would turn to the devil (meaning the racist trio) for assistance if that would save Biafrans from extermination.<sup>3</sup>

The activities of the racist regimes also constituted a clever tactic not only to undermine African unity but also to divert the attention of the O.A.U. to Nigeria, thus weakening

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<sup>1</sup>Africa Report 13:2 (February 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Peter Schwab (ed), Biafra (New York: Garden City, 1971), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Oye Ogunbadejo, "General Gowon's African Policy,"

the support that the organization was rendering to the African Liberation Movements in their war against them. This tactic almost paid off because despite the efforts of the O.A.U. to uphold the principle of nonintervention in the internal politics of member states, four of its members-Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, and Zambia-openly broke ranks and accorded recognition to Biafra-while many more were sympathetic to the Biafran cause.

Partly, as a result of this bitter experience, the post civil war regimes developed a sustained hatred against Southern African racist regimes. Under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria embarked on an activist and militant foreign policy. His administration established itself as a leading African supporter of anti-colonial and liberation movements immediately after the end of the civil war.

Portugal was the first victim of Nigeria's militant moves against the racist regimes not only for her complicity with Biafra but also because of her collaboration with South Africa in her fight against the African nationalists in Southern Africa.<sup>4</sup> At the O.A.U. summit meeting in Addis Ababa in June 1971, General Gowon urged the African leaders "to coordinate their efforts and liberate at least one

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International Studies (January to March, 1977), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>It was learnt that soon after Dr. Marcello Caetano came to power in 1968 as the Portuguese Prime Minister, he reaffirmed his government support of Ian Smith's regime and

Portuguese African territory within three years."<sup>5</sup> To this effect, he suggested the creation of an African High Command and the establishment of a regional office of the O.A.U. liberation Committee in West Africa.<sup>6</sup> In his reference to the colonized peoples of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, General Gowon was quoted as saying,

For without their freedom and independence, there will be continued threat to the peace and security of Africa....Africa's supreme interests lie in the maintenance of our independence and in the total eradication of all forms of colonialism from the continent.<sup>7</sup>

Also, in a radio broadcast to the nation on the occasion of the Eleventh Independence Anniversary celebration on October 1, 1971, the Head of State said inter alia,

With the full knowledge and experience of the civil war behind us, we decided to pursue in every field of human endeavor, the objectives of our independence, unity and development with greater drive and clarity...to protest against colonialist activities in Africa (and) also to contribute promptly toward helping...to overcome the consequences of Portuguese aggression.<sup>8</sup>

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also South Africa in their defense of Southern Africa. Evidence of their collaboration was the visit of the Supreme Commander of the South African Joint Armed Forces, General Frazier, to Mozambique in 1969, and South Africa's intensified material help to the Portuguese troops fighting in Mozambique. (For reference, see Commentaries 1:1 & 2 (October, 1971).

<sup>5</sup>West Africa 9 (July, 1971), p. 773.

Plans for setting up the West African Office of the Liberation Movements were subsequently completed but the government seemed to have softened its position on African High Command perhaps due to opposition from other members of the O.A.U. See Africa Contemporary Record, 1972, p. B658.

<sup>7</sup>Daily Times (Lagos) (December 10, 1970).

<sup>8</sup>Commentaries 2:1 & 2 (April-December, 1972).

The reflection of this attitude was on Nigeria's strong position over the Portuguese-assisted abortive Bay-of-Pigs-style invasion of the Republic of Guinea in 1971. It was perhaps the first time that Nigeria unilaterally offered overt military assistance directly to any country.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly the liberation movements in the Portuguese territories so far had weakened Portugal's stranglehold before Nigeria's staunch opposition. Nevertheless General Gowon's militant stance posed an additional problem for Portugal. Initially its reaction to Nigeria's stance was contemptuous. However Portuguese army officers who fought in those African colonies soon realized that they were fighting a lost battle. Thus, in April 1974, General Spínola ousted dictator Caetano in a military coup d'état and promised to accord independent status to the Portuguese colonies. In his letter to General Gowon who incidentally, was the chairman of the O.A.U. General Spínola stressed the determination of his new regime "to solve the African problem in accordance with the concepts prevailing in contemporary international society, and with strict regard for the self determination of all peoples, expressed through the sovereign will of the local population." He declared:

In this political context, which surely coincides with the position of the member states of the O.A.U., I wish that the present messages contribute to the opening of new avenues of understand-

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<sup>9</sup>R.A. Akindede, "The Conduct of Nigeria's Foreign Relations," International Problems 7 (October 1973), p. 69.

ing leading to a solution of the Portuguese problem in Africa within the framework of an effective solidarity among all African Peoples.<sup>10</sup>

However the progressive elements in Portugal soon realized that General Spínola was never the revolutionary he claimed to be. Therefore he was in turn overthrown by General de Costa Gomes who eventually granted independence to the Portuguese territories.<sup>11</sup>

Under General Gowon, Nigeria took an equally strong position against the apartheid regime of South Africa. The initial criticism of South Africa by Gowon's regime was as a result of a British decision to resume arms sales to that country. General Gowon viewed this move as an open challenge to Africa and as a declaration of open support for apartheid by the British Government. Although he refused to commit himself in advance of the British decision, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, then the Nigerian external Affairs Minister, indicated before leaving for the Commonwealth Conference held in Singapore from 14 to 22 January, 1971, that the Gowon administration would take whatever action "in the best interests of Nigeria" if Britain should decide to sell arms to South Africa.<sup>12</sup> At the Commonwealth Conference, Nigeria joined an 8-nation Study Group set

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<sup>10</sup>Africa Research Bulletin No. 6 (1974), p. 3258.

<sup>11</sup>Africa Report 19 (March-April, 1974), pp. 37-39; (May-June, 1974), pp. 6-10; "Portugal: Revolution and Counter Revolution," Labor Monthly 57 (November, 1975), pp. 509-512.

<sup>12</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1971-1972, p. B658.



up to examine the security of maritime trade routes in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans which were of vital importance for a large number of Commonwealth countries, but left when Britain announced her decision to sell arms to South Africa.<sup>13</sup>

It is in the light of General Gowon's animosity for South Africa that one should perceive his non-fraternization policy toward the proposal by Mr. Vorster of South Africa that Black African states engage in a political dialogue with his racist government which has all along refused such a dialogue with its Black population. The South African government headed by Mr. Vorster had earlier launched a diplomatic offensive to woo some African leaders into initiating a detente with South Africa. On September 15, 1970, he told Parliament that he was prepared to enter into a non-aggressive pact with any of the African states.<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding these overtures however, General Gowon reaffirmed Nigeria's opposition to South Africa's apartheid regime "unless the regime abrogates its obnoxious Policy."<sup>15</sup>

A number of African states led by Ivory Coast fell victim to Mr Vorster's overtures by accepting dialogue as a means of effecting a change of the philosophy of apartheid.

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<sup>13</sup>Daily Times (Lagos) (March 23, 1971), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Africa Research Bulletin (September 30, 1970), p. 1862.

<sup>15</sup>Radio Nigeria (November 27, 1970).

However, on the insistence of the Gowon administration, the matter was brought before the O.A.U. where a resolution was adopted condemning any non-aggression pact with South Africa. Earlier, the Nigerian Government had deplored the meetings between Mr. Vorster and some of the African leaders. Such meetings, according to Dr. Okoi Arikpo, should be viewed as "clever tactics" which the racist regime could employ to further perpetuate its oppressive policies.<sup>16</sup> Thus Nigeria had headed off a diplomatic coup by South Africa that would have weakened the African countries' opposition towards apartheid.

In the midst of Nigeria's diplomatic offensive against South Africa, an embarrassing rumour erupted in regard to certain Nigerian businessmen who allegedly were making trade contacts with South Africa. In order to avoid tarnishing Nigeria's image and credibility the federal Government immediately announced that it was investigating the report of these alleged contacts. The Head of state simultaneously warned of the "consequence of treachery" if the reports were proved to be true. He also warned that any embassy which made it possible for such unauthorized visits to be made by issuing visas, "would have itself to blame for any action the Federal Military Government might decide to take to protect the good

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<sup>16</sup>Radio Nigeria, February 21, 1975. Quoted from Africa Research Bulletin (February 1-28, 1975), p. 3523C.

name of Nigeria. The rumour was later dismissed by Dr. Arikpo, the External Affairs Commissioner as "unfounded."<sup>17</sup>

General Gowon equally never forgave the white supremacist government of Mr. Ian Smith not only because of its racist policies but also its complicity in Nigeria's civil war. Nigerians became more aware of the existence of Ian Smith's Government as a danger to the security of all African states. Like the O.A.U., Nigeria under General Gowon became more determined to work towards the attainment of Black majority rule in Zimbabwe. On March 12, 1971, the Gowon Administration publicly reaffirmed its support of the O.A.U. resolution of March 7, denouncing the illegal declaration as contrary to human or natural justice."<sup>18</sup>

In November 1971, after series of talks were held between the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas Home and Mr. Ian Smith, a tentative agreement was reached purportedly ending the Zimbabwean Independence crisis. But none of the Zimbabwean Black leaders was consulted in any meaningful way for their input in drawing up such a settlement that would control the lives of over five million Blacks in Zimbabwe. African states had earlier protested against the British

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<sup>17</sup>There were serious speculations that certain Nigerian businessmen who had ties with the Gowon regime, were involved in the covert business. Incidentally the report of the investigation was never released. See Adebisi op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>18</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1971-1972, p. B422.

delegation in Zimbabwe and had pointed out that the outcome of the talks with Ian Smith was not going to be popular with the African people.

Expectedly, the announcement of the settlement proposal precipitated strongly hostile reaction in Nigeria. The New Nigerian branded it British "deceit and hypocrisy" and also viewed it as an "indelibly bad concluding chapter to the British colonial history in Africa."<sup>19</sup> The Gowon Administration reacted with an uncompromising announcement that it would "reexamine its obligations to the Commonwealth," if Britain allowed independence before Black majority rule in Zimbabwe. Nigeria's threat to British interests, coupled with the negative responses throughout Africa, sounded the death knell of the so-called Angola-Rhodesian settlement proposals.

In April 1974, Nigeria was found in the midst of a controversy that raged over a Zimbabwean based British multinational Company, Lonrho, retained on the advice of the O.A.U. General Secretary, Nzo Ekangaki as a consultant to the O.A.U. on African-Arab oil relations. The Nigerian position stood at odds with that of the Secretary-General who claimed that "Lonrho's views on Southern Africa were entirely coincidental with those of the O.A.U.," and therefore threatened to resign if his decision on Lonrho was re-

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<sup>19</sup>New Nigerian (November 26, 1971).

jected. Notwithstanding a potential major rift which might develop within the O.A.U. and the threat of resignation by the secretary-General, the Gowon Administration, with the support of majority of the member states, stood its ground. Fortunately the potential rift was averted when the company decided to void the contract.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, General Gowon had in a few instances applied moderation in his anti-white minority stance. For instance, in his United Nations speech delivered on October 1973, he used a conciliatory tone to appeal to the racist regimes for a re-evaluation of their policies. He declared,

Nobody in Africa wishes to adopt the path of armed struggle and conflict against these minority regimes for the love of it; nobody asked that people who normally live in Africa and wish to consider themselves as part of Africa should, in any manner or means, be made to feel unwelcome to live in Africa, for they are Africans.<sup>21</sup>

In the same vein, General Gowon appealed to the South African and Zimbabwean regimes after the collapse of the Portuguese African empire to "take the cue" from the Portuguese. In his address delivered at the O.A.U. summit meeting in Somalia in his capacity as chairman, General Gowon indicated that the organization was prepared to give considerable time to those remaining Southern African regimes to reconsider their policies.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Africa Report 19 (March-April, 1974), p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>West Affrica (1974), p. 1470.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 774.

It might be contended that the racist regimes did not deserve Gowon's conciliatory diplomatic moves since such actions had been tried by several Heads of African states without fruitful results. For instance while President Houphouet Boigny and a number of African rulers had accepted the idea of detente, President Tolbert had in his own initiative hosted Mr. Vorster in Liberia; and Dr. Kamuzu Banda, the Malawian President, had in actuality visited South Africa on a unilateral move to discuss apartheid with Prime Minister Vorster.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding, General Gowon deserves commendation for his overall Southern African policy demonstrated in: (1) The rejection of British maneuver with regard to point by point majority rule in Zimbabwe (i.e. Anglo-Rhodesian Agreement, 1971); (2) Rejection of dialogue with South Africa even though several African countries accepted the offer; (3) Increase in Nigeria's influence over the O.A.U.'s stronger resolutions against the minority regimes of Southern Africa; and (4) The overt material assistance to liberation movements, particularly those in the former Portuguese territories. Certainly General Gowon improved the old image of Nigeria, thus winning the confidence of states like Guinea and Tanzania as Black Africa's greatest nation.<sup>24</sup> Generally,

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<sup>23</sup>Africa Research Bulletin (February 1-28, 1975) p. 3525.

<sup>24</sup>Adebisi, op. cit., p. 82.

it is the contention of many students of Nigerian foreign policy that it was General Gowon who prepared the foundation on which the superstructure of Nigeria's present militant and aggressive African policy is based.

Muhammed/Obasanjo Regime 1975-1979

The bloodless coup of July 1975 brought General Murtala Muhammed into power as Nigeria's Head of state. The task of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation (as a result of the civil war) which at times affected General Gowon's foreign policy decisions had been virtually completed. Therefore the advent of General Muhammed's regime brought with it, a more dynamic Southern African policy which translated into what his administration described as "the permanent interest of Nigeria and the higher interest of the continent of Africa."<sup>25</sup> Observers wondered what this would entail. The first real test of his administration was the Angolan crisis which started as a result of Portugal's unceremonious and sudden withdrawal from that country without helping to settle the question of succession between the contending nationalist groups in Angola.<sup>26</sup> Since General Murtala continued to nurse serious grievances against the Southern African racist redoubts for their role in the Nigerian civil war, Angola offered an avenue for his administration to

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<sup>25</sup>Federal Nigeria (October-December, 1976), p. 6

<sup>26</sup>After the Portuguese left, a power vacuum was created

demonstrate a tougher Nigerian policy stance which would pressure the Western countries and their Southern African allies into a reassessment of their policies.

After independence was granted to Angola, a major crisis began which opened up a new chapter in international affairs. The three liberation movements with the support of the O.A.U. agreed at the eve of independence to form a government of national unity in the Alvor agreement of January 15, 1975.<sup>27</sup> However such a unified national government was repugnant to the counter-insurgency scenario of United States C.I.A. and Dr. Henry Kissinger, then the American Secretary of State whose objective was to insure that forces friendly to the United States should take power to safeguard the mineral and energy resources of Angola.<sup>28</sup> Besides, Angola is strategically located next to Zaire, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, all allies of the Western World. There was the fear in the West European and American circles that the MPLA which received support from the Soviet Union would constitute a threat to their interests if it were allowed to play a significant role in the Angolan government. Hence South Africa, with the approval of the U.S., initiated a move in support of U.N.I.T.A. and FNLA, the

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<sup>27</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1974-1975, pp. B539; C217.

<sup>28</sup>Apart from the American Banking Community, American Corporations operating in Angola include Gulf oil, U.S. Steel, and Morrison-Knudson.



lackeys of the Western Camp.<sup>29</sup>

It was ironic that South Africa, of all countries, was involved in a war for the "freedom" of an African country. Such an alliance between African nationalist groups and South Africa caused those groups Africa's support. President Nyerere condemned it in the strongest terms.<sup>30</sup> Vorster's apartheid regime had again convincingly demonstrated with this expansionist tendency that it could easily pose a threat to the security of African states. Earlier, Nigeria, like the O.A.U., was in favor of the formation of a government of national unity in Angola pursuant to the Kampala Summit resolution.<sup>31</sup> But it soon realized that it was no longer possible to pursue a policy of reconciliation of the warring parties since there was abundant evidence of South African troops in the conflict. General Muhammed felt that the success of South Africa in establishing a puppet government in Angola would constitute a danger to the future of African solidarity and would likewise cripple African nationalist activities mounted towards the total liberation of Africa.

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<sup>29</sup>There were numerous reports that the U.S. and South Africa collaborated in sending South African troops to Angola in their quest to put the MPLA troops in disarray. See New York Times (January 25, 1976); Newsweek (May 17, 1976).

<sup>30</sup>Southern Africa (February 1976), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup>Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, After Angola: The War On Southern Africa (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 9-10.

He also realized that the factions fighting against the M.P.L.A. were backed not only by South Africa but also by other interests which were obviously against Angolan independence and freedom in the continent of Africa.<sup>32</sup> Therefore Nigeria was left with no choice but to recognize the M.P.L.A. on November 26, 1975 in preference to the FNLA/U.N.I.T.A. alliance which had violated the O.A.U. charter by joining forces with racist South Africa.

During his visit to Lagos, Angola's Prime Minister Nascimento brought two of four South African soldiers captured deep inside Angola a few days earlier, thus confirming the strong backing of Nigeria for the MPLA. General Muhammed in turn, delivered an address which clearly underscored Nigeria's position vis-a-vis the Angolan situation. He said,

Our Brothers and Sisters of Angola:....I want to assure you that in your hour of need, we are solidly behind you in your efforts not only to stand alone but give respectability and dignity to the black race....We in Nigeria are committed to the total liberation of the whole of Africa and we will not fold our hands to see our brothers and sisters in Angola subjugated, exploited and recolonized by the racials and imperialists in South Africa and their supporters. Never will any liberated African soil be colonized again.

Your struggle is therefore our struggle and we will support you both morally and materially until absolute victory is gained in Angola. In the traditional African way of life, we believe we are our brothers' keepers.

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<sup>32</sup>In this instance, the Western nations, particularly the U.S., were implicated as accomplices.

We recognize that the MPLA truly represents the interests of the Angolan people and the African interests. We condemn in the strongest terms, external influences colluding together to subvert and destroy the Angolan unity and the welfare of the Angolan people. We believe in and uphold the stand of the MPLA in striving to build a truly independent African nation, free to pursue independent and non-aligned policies in international affairs and within the country of nations.....I therefore appeal to all our brothers and sisters in Angola wherever they are and whatever their persuasion to unite and face a common enemy that is threatening to destroy and devour them.<sup>33</sup>

During Prime Minister Nascimento's visit, the Nigerian Head of state demonstrated Nigeria's strong support for the MPLA by giving it financial assistance of 20 million dollars (about 13.5 million naira).<sup>34</sup> Although it was not confirmed by Nigerian officials, Prime Minister Nascimento announced on his return from the visit that this sum was the first installment of 100 million dollars worth of financial assistance promised by the Nigerian leader.

Nigeria's action which was often described as "the oxygen of MPLA offensive"<sup>35</sup> forced President Gerald Ford not only to dispatch an envoy on "an arm twisting" mission to Africa but also to address "overbearing circular letters" to all African Heads of State suggesting that the forthcoming O.A.U. Council of Ministers and Summit Conference should

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<sup>33</sup>Daily Times (Lagos), Saturday (December 20, 1975).

<sup>34</sup>Times International (Nigeria) (January 19, 1976),  
p. 4.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

insist on the withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban military advisers "as a quid pro quo for the withdrawal of the racist South African occupation forces."<sup>36</sup> The Nigerian Federal Military Government viewed this action as "an insult to the intelligence of African nations" and "a scorn to the dignity of the Black man." It urged African nations to reject such a "directive" by sounding a note that "gone are the days when Africa ever bowed to the threat of any so-called super power."<sup>37</sup> Thus, Nigeria's support for the MPLA became a diplomatic life-line for the Angolan government. Within a few weeks after its recognition of MPLA as the legitimate representative of the Angolans, an overwhelming number of African countries, through Nigeria's diplomatic pressure lined up behind Dr. Neto, (the Angolan President). Their support effectively ended the "limping O.A.U. policy of abortively reconciling three contending groups. The Organization of African Unity on February 11, 1976, officially recognized the MPLA proclaimed People's Republic of Angola (P.R.A.) as a member of the Organization.

Obviously as a result of policy difference over the civil war in Angola, relations between Nigeria and the U.S. during President Ford's administration reached a low ebb. Demonstrations were staged in the cities of Kaduna and Ibadan

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<sup>36</sup>Federal Ministry of Information Release, No. 16, January 6, 1976).

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

in Nigeria against the U.S. policy. These demonstrations were followed by an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Lagos on January 11, 1976. Also after the abortive coup of February 13, 1976, in which General Muhammed was assassinated, demonstrators attacked the British High Commission and the U.S. Embassy, claiming Western complicity in the plot. Nigeria refused to receive Dr. Kissinger during his African tour in April 1976 to follow up the Ford Administration's campaign against Russian and Cuban presence in Africa. The Nigerian Federal Military Government also ordered the closure of the U.S. radio monitoring station in Kaduna.<sup>38</sup> These highly publicized actions added a new dimension to Nigeria's efforts to influence the Western bloc.

The foiled coup aggravated the downturn in Anglo-Nigerian relations. The Nigerian Government headed by General Obasanjo stated that Nigeria's special relationship with Britain no longer existed. This was confirmed in a press conference in Kenya on his way home from a Summit Conference of the O.A.U. in Mauritius, when the Nigerian Foreign Affairs Commissioner said that "Our relations with Britain are as good as with any other country."<sup>39</sup> Such a position was in

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<sup>38</sup>Africa Contemporary Record, 1975-1976, p. B799.

<sup>39</sup>Nigerian Tide (July 9, 1976), p. 16. Partly because of the strain in Anglo-Nigerian relations, Nigeria sold most of her pound sterling, reducing the reserves before the end of 1975 from 1000 million pounds sterling down 300 million, thus adding to the ruin of the British pound sterling in 1976. (See Africa Contemporary Record, 1975-1976, p. B799.)

sharp contrast to the pro-Western lack-luster posture of Nigerian foreign policy under Sir Abubakar.

The Federal Military Government did not waver in its resolve to support the freedom of blacks in Southern Africa despite the untimely death of General Muhammed. His successor, General Obasanjo, in a broadcast to the nation immediately after the coup, gave the assurance that Nigeria would continue "to pursue a vigorous and dynamic foreign policy for the solidarity and total independence of Africa."<sup>40</sup> He assured a special envoy who delivered a message of condolence to him from President Neto of Angola that Nigeria, under his leadership, was "fully committed to Angola and would continue to support Angola to solidify its independence and territorial integrity. Hence the Obasanjo Administration established a training program for Angolan students for the pursuit of various areas of study in Nigeria's institutions. Simultaneously two Nigerian petroleum engineers were assigned to help restore the crude oil production activities in the newly independent Angola."<sup>41</sup> These were efforts to redeem Angola from an acute shortage of manpower and material resources as a result of many years of colonial exploitation. Thus in concrete terms, the success of the MPLA in Angola

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<sup>40</sup>Ministry of Information Release, No. 304, March 5, 1976.

<sup>41</sup>Daily Times (Nigeria), May 19, 1976, p. 16.

which culminated into effective government was perceived in political circles as Nigeria's first victory over imperialist forces.

Nigeria's support during the Obasanjo administration was not limited to only Angola. The Nigerian Head of State equally assured Mozambicans that they could always count on Nigeria's support in their struggle to safeguard their hard-won independence. He used the occasion of his visit to Mozambique in September 1977 to admonish the minority regimes of Southern Africa when in his address to the populist rally in Maputo, he said, "Your frontiers of freedom must be extended beyond the borders of Mozambique."<sup>42</sup> Before this visit, General Obasanjo had given financial assistance of one million naira to help Mozambique offset losses she might sustain as a result of the closure of her border with the minority regime in Zimbabwe.<sup>43</sup>

As regards South Africa, both Generals Muhammed and Obasanjo happened to be military commanders in various war fronts where apartheid South Africa was suspected of aiding and abetting Biafra's attempt to secede from Nigeria. To them therefore, South Africa became an enemy state not only as a result of her racist ideology but also her contribution

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Tuesday, September 6, 1977.

<sup>43</sup>Mozambique closed her border with Zimbabwe in protest against the racist policies of Mr. Ian Smith, thus losing some revenue that hitherto accrued from Zimbabwe for the usage of her ports.

to the efforts to dismember the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In May 1976, under the leadership of General Obasanjo, Nigeria launched a Reconstituted Committee for the Dissemination of Information on the Evils of Apartheid.<sup>44</sup> Its major function was to "educate and inform" the Nigerian public on the evils of apartheid so that it would be appreciative of whatever actions taken by the Federal Government in its battle against racism. Already the Nigerian public could appreciate the plight of black people of Southern Africa. However the increased tempo in the liberation struggle in Southern Africa and Nigeria's more dynamic posture in international relations made it more imperative that such a committee to rejuvenated.

Equally important is the fact that the Obasanjo administration pari-passau, launched the Southern African Relief Fund in Nigeria, with an official donation of about 7 million naira, to aid the blacks of Southern Africa in their struggle "for freedom and dignity." The government appealed to public servants to contribute 2 percent of their April salaries of 1977 to this fund.<sup>45</sup> Through the collection of this fund and the education of the Nigerian public on the evils of apartheid, General Obasanjo's Government made an overwhelming number of Nigerians more aware of the situation

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<sup>44</sup>A similar committee existed in the past but later became virtually defunct.

<sup>45</sup>West Africa (March 28, 1977).



in Southern Africa and thereby winning greater sympathy for the liberation cause.

Nigerian government embarked on a massive enrollment of Southern African students in Nigerian schools and colleges at Nigeria's expense. The first batch of 86 Southern African refugees who fled from the racist regimes arrived in Nigeria to continue their education in various centers. Forty six of these students were from Soweto in South Africa while the rest were Zimbabweans who escaped the oppressive regime of the Smith regime.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, in an irrevocable stand against apartheid and racism, Nigeria withdrew from the Olympic Games held in Montreal, Canada, in protest against New Zealand's participation. This action was taken because New Zealand allowed her nationals to mount an athletic tour of apartheid South Africa especially at a time when the massacre of Africans in Soweto<sup>47</sup> was still fresh in memory, thus underscoring its insensitivity to African humiliation and degradation. In actuality Nigeria's action was in compliance with a resolution adopted at the thirteenth O.A.U. Summit conference that member states should boycott the olympics unless the international

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<sup>46</sup> Several more students from Southern Africa were expected to be enrolled. See Federal Nigeria 3:1 (April-June 1977), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> This involved large scale killings and wounding of Africans including school children by the South African police when the former were demonstrating against racial discrimination in Soweto on June 16, 1976.

Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) "prevailed upon New Zealand to withdraw from the games on account of her sporting links with the racist South African regime."<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless the response was unlike the negative type given to the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the O.A.U. in late 1965 stipulating that member states should break diplomatic relations with Britain if she refused to crush Ian Smith's regime. The pull-out of Nigeria from the Olympics marked the beginning of the withdrawal of other African countries.

In another instance, a few weeks before the Carter administration took office, the Nigerian Commissioner for External Affairs, Brigadier Garba took a jibe at the United States in a categorical statement, warning it against any military pact with South Africa. In a statement issued in Masaru, Lesotho in December 1976, The Commissioner revealed that there had been talks of a defense agreement between the United States and the South African Government, "ostensibly to ensure the protection of the Cape of Good Hope against an 'imaginary' invader." He argued that "the so-called defense of the Cape route...was a calculated issue to consolidate the racist stronghold in the face of mounting pressure for change within South Africa itself." Brigadier Garba warned, "It is our view that a defense pact with the apartheid regime will

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<sup>48</sup> Federal Ministry of Information Release, No. 860, July 16, 1976.

be regarded by the whole of Africa as an act of aggression against the continent."<sup>49</sup>

Already South Africa has been boasting of nuclear capability. Whether this is merely a braggadocio or reckless blackmail, there is no doubt that the Western nations would stop at nothing to protect their interests in South Africa, even if their actions violate the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.<sup>50</sup> NATO is also allegedly actively involved militarily with South Africa. There has lately been a resounding evidence of the inclusion of the use of that organization's system of codification of military equipment in South Africa's military communication's system.<sup>51</sup>

The Obasanjo regime, was perceived by Mr, Vorster as nothing but a thorn in the flesh of his apartheid government. Therefore he was reportedly planning to invade Nigeria "as a reprisal for the nation's new dynamic foreign policy in Africa and the backing given to liberation struggle in South

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., No. 1246 (October 22, 1975).

<sup>50</sup>Of course the mere fact that South Africa is not a party to such a treaty eliminates any compunctions in their decisions to convert her nuclear plants into military arsenals in utter violation of U.N. Resolution 2033 (XX) which stipulates that all nations respect the continent of Africa as a nuclear free zone. Nigeria's reaction was to demand the expulsion of South Africa from the International Atomic Energy See Daily Times (Lagos), September 24, 1976, p. 9.

Federal Ministry of Information Release, No. 1246, October 22, 1975.

Africa." This revelation was made by Mr. Oliver Tambo, President of the African Nationalist Congress (ANC) of South Africa who was on a visit to Nigeria.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of South Africa's threats, the Obasanjo Administration maintained its pressure on South Africa. As a further demonstration of its deep commitment to the solution of the problem of apartheid, Nigeria hosted the Conference on World Action Against Apartheid in Lagos in August 1977. During the Conference, a Program of Action, otherwise known as "Lagos Declaration," was adopted which would go a long way to dislodge the inhuman racist machinery run by South Africa.<sup>53</sup> It was at this conference that General Obasanjo revealed that Nigeria had established an economic intelligence unit which would report on businesses dealing with South Africa and recommend the sanctions which they would face. Specifically the Head of State was referring to those enterprises that depended on Nigeria's raw materials and markets but continued to help those regarded as Nigeria's "enemies." He warned, "Such enterprises must decide now to choose between us and our enemies and all that goes with their choice."<sup>54</sup> It was

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<sup>52</sup>Sunday Sketch (Nigeria), November 28, 1976, pp. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup>Nigeria at the U.N. (An Annual Magazine of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the U.N.), 1977, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup>West Africa (August 29, 1977), p. 1754. Foreign Construction companies who were known to have connections with South Africa already had been barred from participating in economic transactions in Nigeria.

earlier disclosed that the Union Trading Company (U.T.C.), a foreign owned company in Nigeria had business connections with South Africa. On investigation, large quantities of assorted South African goods were discovered and confiscated.<sup>55</sup>

In 1979, Nigeria again flexed its commercial muscles in the course of international politics by nationalizing British Petroleum (B.P.) assets. This company was allegedly exporting Nigeria's oil covertly to South Africa. With this move, B.P. lost its entitlement to almost 300,000 barrels a day of Nigerian oil and thus forcing up prices in Europe where most of the B.P. oil goes.<sup>56</sup> Nigeria's action was also as a result of the sour nature of Anglo-Nigerian relations caused by Mrs. Thatcher's initial insensitivity to the question of majority rule in Zimbabwe.<sup>57</sup>

The situation in Namibia where the South African government has continued to perpetuate its stranglehold, continues to deteriorate. The racist regime has no difficulty in flouting the resolutions of the United Nations due to unflinching support from its Western allies, who due to the usual economic reason, continue to equivocate over the need to return the territory to political legitimacy.

Ironically it was these Western allies, including the

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<sup>55</sup>Nigeria Standard, February 17, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup>West Africa (August 6, 1979), p. 1399.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

United Kingdom, France, West Germany, U.S.A. and Canada (the so-called Western contact Group), who decided in 1977 to abandon Security Council Resolution 385 of 1976 on Namibia and embarked on a private initiative to search for a solution to the Namibian question. The efforts resulted into the ill fated "Proximity Talks" held in New York on February 1978.<sup>58</sup> Expectedly the South African government raised all sorts of "red herrings" to hinder the progress of the negotiations.

Nigeria viewed all these developments with great concern. Together with the front line states,<sup>59</sup> it had all along actively supported various initiatives seeking negotiated solutions to the Namibian question. But the failure of the Western Contact Group to devise any acceptable formula for a settlement dampened Nigeria's eagerness for a peaceful solution. The Obasanjo Administration had earlier given permission to the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO), the only nationalist movement in Namibia, to open an office in Nigeria<sup>60</sup> since such proximity would facilitate easy and prompt coordination of activities between Nigeria and the nationalist group. Then with the stalling of the talks, Nigeria promised to render to SWAPO, "every possible diplomatic and other assistance." This

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<sup>58</sup>Nigeria at the U.N., 1978, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup>These include Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, and Mozambique.

<sup>60</sup>New Nigeria (April 6, 1976), pp. 1-2.

gesture was described by Mr. Nujoma, the President of SWAPO as a wonderful inspiration and encouragement to the people of Namibia.<sup>61</sup>

Zimbabwe posed another nagging problem for the Federal Military Government of General Obasanjo. The first major Western diplomatic maneuver in relation to Zimbabwe during Obasanjo's tenure was Dr. Henry Kissinger's proposal in 1976 aimed at bringing majority rule to that country. The clearest summary of his proposal was spelled out in his Lusaka address in which he emphasized ten major points dealing with not only Zimbabwe, but also Namibia and South Africa.<sup>62</sup> It was believed that the new reality of a major Soviet and Cuban military presence in Southern Africa, and the fall of both Angola and Mozambique to regimes sympathetic to the Soviet Union, caused the Ford Administration, under the leadership of Henry Kissinger as the Secretary of State to launch the so-called "majority rule approach" or new African policy. Therefore the Nigerian government never regarded the maneuver as a "positive response" to the yearnings of the majority of the Zimbabweans but rather a "diplomatic ruse" to confer legality and international respectability to the illegal regime of Ian Smith. The Nigerian Federal Government spoke out in condemnation of such an initiative

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>New York Times, April 29, 1976.

which surfaced not only as a reaction against the so-called Soviet and Cuban influence but also a reaction designed to halt the military successes of the nationalists fighting in Zimbabwe. Besides, Kissinger's mission was doomed to failure from the point of view of his refusal to deal directly with the liberation movements.

Meanwhile, the Obasanjo administration made a donation of about 134,000 Naira toward the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. At the same time, Dr. Joshua Nkomo, one of the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders flew into Nigeria to "brief the Head of state" on the situation in that country.<sup>63</sup> During this visit, the Nigerian Head of State stressed Nigeria's unflinching support for the Zimbabwean nationalists.

In April 1977, David Owen, new British Foreign Minister introduced a fresh Anglo-American settlement initiative, culminating in the publication in September of new settlement proposals for Zimbabwe. Although the Patriotic Front Alliance led by Joshua Nkomo and Mugabe criticized it for its inherent imperfections, General Obasanjo and the Front line Heads of state decided to give it a chance on the premise that so far, it provided the only reasonable basis for negotiation. It was reported that the Nigerian government at that time had reached a working understanding with the Patriotic Front as well as the U.S. and Britain. The

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<sup>63</sup>Federal Nigeria 3:1 (April-June, 1977), p. 6.



U.N. Peace-Keeping Force which the plan also called for, would be composed with a balance that would give Nigeria a "pre-ponderant weight."<sup>64</sup>

The Nigerian Government threw its full weight in support of the proposals at a time when it was still unpopular with the nationalist groups and most African states because the government believed that it (the proposal) contained a workable formula for resolving the crisis peacefully. However when Ian Smith dawdled over the acceptance in its entirety and also when it became clear that neither Britain nor U.S. was prepared to back up the proposals, Nigeria discovered the futility of her support.

As an alternative to the proposals, Ian Smith proposed what he termed an "Internal Settlement" consummated with the support of some moderate black leaders in Zimbabwe.<sup>65</sup> The "Internal Settlement" talks produced an agreement reached on February 15, 1978, and endorsed on March 3, for an eventual majority rule on December 31, 1978.

The Patriotic Front Alliance was excluded from this agreement. Moreover majority of Blacks in Zimbabwe were not given an opportunity to understand the principles of the

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<sup>64</sup>For details of the Plan, See Africa Research Bulletin, (September 1-30, 1977), p. 4555.

<sup>65</sup>These moderate black leaders include Sithole, Bishop Muzorewa and Chief Jeremiah Chirau.

constitution on which a general election was based for the installation of majority rule. Despite such flagrant violation of democratic principles, there were various moves by the Western countries, particularly U.S. and Britain for the lifting of economic sanctions<sup>66</sup> against Zimbabwe and eventual recognition on the basis of the Internal Settlement. These moves drew the wrath of most African countries including Nigeria which condemned such negation of basic human rights. It was at this level of the crisis that Nigeria demonstrated an outstanding brilliance in international diplomacy.

Nigeria unequivocally warned against the Internal Settlement. In the United Nations General Assembly, Brigadier Garba succinctly stated, "We oppose it, we condemn and we want to kill it because it is a recipe for civil war."<sup>67</sup> Mrs. Thatcher's threat to lift sanctions against Zimbabwe and recognize Bishop Muzorewa's government drew hostile reactions from the Obasanjo regime. Some British firms were removed on the order of the Nigerian Federal Government from consideration for major construction tenders in Nigeria. This involved a major British construction consortium comprising Costain, Cementation International and Balfour Beatty which had been informed of the cancellation of its tender for Nigerian port

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<sup>66</sup>These were the U.N. economic sanctions imposed in 1966 as a result of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

<sup>67</sup>West Africa (June 5, 1978), p. 1090.

development.<sup>68</sup> It was expected that Nigeria's reaction would galvanize more hostile moves by some Afro-Asian countries against the British. Moreover, outside Europe and North America, Nigeria is Britain's leading market. Between 1977 and 1978, British exports to Nigeria was in excess of \$2 billion, thus making Nigeria Britain's leading market in Africa.<sup>69</sup> Therefore Britain had no choice but to swallow her pride.

The United States was also tempted to lift sanctions and accord recognition to Zimbabwe. The Senate on two occasions voted to put these actions into effect. However Nigeria's use of her mineral oil as a weapon against such moves became a factor which the United States had to contend with.<sup>70</sup>

Under these circumstances, Britain in particular, decisively initiated a working formula for political independence which became acceptable to all parties in the Zimbabwean conflict. A constitutional conference on Zimbabwe was held at the Lancaster House, London, from September 10 to December 17, 1979. On December 21, 1979, the Patriotic Front and the illegal regime in Zimbabwe, reached an agreement on a new constitution, a transition period and a cease-

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., No. 3230 (June 11, 1979), p. 1048.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Over 30 percent of the U.S. imports of crude oil comes from Nigeria. See Nigeria in the U.N. (1976), p. 35.

fire.<sup>71</sup> The Nigerian representative at the U.N. Security Council Debate on Zimbabwe, Mr. B. Akporode Clark described it as "the results of collective wisdom and sense of realism of those who took part in them...attribute to the deligence, perseverance and patriotism of the Patriotic Front leaders, who above all, made the agreement possible."<sup>72</sup>

## Section II

### International Agencies and Nigeria's Foreign

#### Policy Towards Southern Africa: The

#### U.N. and the O.A.U., 1967-1979

Like the Balewa regime, the military regimes attempted to use Interantional organizations including the U.N. and the O.A.U. as a forum for the expression of their policies towards Southern Africa. They recognized that these organizations could not serve as a substitute for power politics, or as sole catalysts for the eradication of apartheid and colonialism in that region. Nevertheless they felt that their votes could be effective in arousing the world conscience against such evils.

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<sup>71</sup>For the details of the constitution refer to: Journal of Southern African Affairs 4:4 (1979),

<sup>72</sup>See statement delivered by His Excellency, Mr. B. Akporode Clark at the Security Council Debate on Zimbabwe on December 21, 1979. ( A publication of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the U.N.).

The United Nations

Unlike the Abubakar Administration which could not maintain a firm policy stance in the U.N. vis-a-vis Southern Africa, the post civil war regimes were known to have consistently utilized the same organization as a rallying point for the expression of their uncomprising commitments to the eradication of the racialist regimes of Southern Africa. Immediately after the end of the Civil War, Dr. Okoi Arikpo demonstrated this commitment not only through his U.N. vote reaffirming the inalienable right of the people of Namibia to freedom and independence but also through his stern warnings during the debate on South Africa which ended with a General Assembly Declaration on Colonialism and Apartheid. In an address to the twenty fifth General Assembly, Dr. Arikpo clearly stated that the West should choose between helping to eradicate apartheid and retaining Africa's friendship, and staining "their hands with the precious blood of our people until we can tolerate them no longer."<sup>73</sup>

Nigeria did not play a very active role in the United Nations during the civil war. With a domestic problem of that magnitude, she seemed more concerned with mending her own fences. On the other hand, not many draft resolutions on Southern Africa were introduced by members of the Organization during that time. The major concern of members con-

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<sup>73</sup>Daily Times (October 17, 1970), p. 40.

tinued to center on Zimbabwe and the unilateral declaration of independence by Ian Smith.

On October 27, 1967, Nigeria sponsored a draft resolution (A/C.4/L.870) condemning the refusal of Britain to take effective measures to bring down the illegal racist minority regime. The draft resolution stipulated that sanctions, to be effective, must be comprehensive, mandatory, and backed by force. It also condemned the continued support given the regime by South Africa and Portugal.

In his address during a General Debate, the Nigerian representative, Mr. Olutoye scornfully stated that "no one had been taken by surprise by the unilateral declaration of independence, except perhaps the United Kingdom Government."<sup>74</sup> He declared, "Being assured that that Government would not use force against him, Mr. Smith had carried out his plans and siezed power. Rejecting the use of force, the United Kingdom Government had taken it upon itself to dictate what economic, political and diplomatic sanction ought to be imposed against the Salisbury regime, at what movement, and in what circumstances. It was no wonder that the policy of selective sanctions had failed and that Mr. Smith was still firmly in the saddle."<sup>75</sup> The Nigerian resolution was finally

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<sup>74</sup>A/C.4/SR.1695.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

adopted by a vote of 92 to 2, with 18 abstentions.<sup>76</sup>

During 1968, Zimbabwe received further consideration by the General Assembly, and the Security Council. On March 12, 1968, Nigeria and 37 other African states, gravely concerned that the selective mandatory sanctions which were imposed on Zimbabwe by the Security Council against the illegal regime in 1966<sup>77</sup> had failed to prevent trade with that regime, wrote a letter requesting an urgent meeting of the Security Council to examine the situation in Zimbabwe. The meeting was held on May 29, 1968 and as usual, the Security Council reaffirmed its resolutions 216(1965) of November 1965, 221(1966) of 9th April, 1966 and 232(1966) of 16th December 1966.

Furthermore, Nigeria and 35 other member states submitted a draft resolution<sup>78</sup> in the General Assembly expressing the view that coercive measure and force should be used by Britain to end the Smith rebellion. Expressing Nigeria's support for this move, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, then the Nigerian foreign Minister reiterated that "It is over eighteen months since both the General Assembly and the Security Council determined that the situation in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) constituted a threat to international peace and security.

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<sup>76</sup>Resolution 2262 (XXII).

<sup>77</sup>Y.U.N., 1966, pp. 116-117, text of resolution 232 (1966).

<sup>78</sup>A/C.4/L.908/Rev. 1.

Since that time we have found that the diplomatic and mandatory economic sanctions so far applied under chapter VII of our Charter against the illegal minority regime of Ian Smith have been of no significant avail."<sup>79</sup> Subsequently the General Assembly passed a "watered down" resolution<sup>80</sup> calling upon all states not to recognize any form of independence in Zimbabwe without the prior establishment of a government based on majority rule in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514(XV) and also (2) calling upon the Government of Great Britain and Northern Ireland not to grant independence to Zimbabwe unless it was preceded by the establishment of a government based on free elections by universal adult suffrage and on majority rule.

On July 15, 1970, Nigeria joined representatives of 40 member states in requesting an urgent meeting of the Security Council to resume consideration of the question of race conflict in South Africa-resulting from the policies of apartheid with a view to examining the violations of the arms embargo called for in Security Council Resolutions.<sup>81</sup>

The Security Council considered the matter between July 17 and 23 and adopted a resolution: (1) reiterating its total opposition to the policies of apartheid; (2) con-

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<sup>79</sup>A/PV, 1692.

<sup>80</sup>Resolution 2379 (XXIII).

<sup>81</sup>Y.U.N., 1964, pp. 119-120, text of resolution 191 (1964).



demning the violations of the arms embargo and (3) calling upon all states to strengthen the arms embargo. The votes were 12 to 0, with 3 abstentions (U.K., France and U.S.).<sup>82</sup>

On October 8, 1970, a 52-power draft resolution by which the General Assembly would call for full implementation of the arms embargo was put before the Special Political Committee. Nigeria co-sponsored this draft resolution<sup>83</sup> which subsequently received an overwhelming approval by roll-call vote of 98 to 2, with 9 abstentions. In an emotional appeal to member states before the vote was taken, Mr. Edwin Ogbu, the Nigerian representative declared,

My delegation believes that no member of the United Nations ought to aid or abet the South African racists in their criminal adventures. Therefore, on behalf of my delegation and all African delegates, I appeal to all states to enforce fully and sincerely<sup>84</sup> the arms embargo imposed by this organization.

At a plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on October 23, 1970, proposals made by the Ambassador of Somalia that the credentials Committee be requested under rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly to examine the credentials of the representatives of apartheid South Africa, received a very strong endorsement from Nigeria.<sup>85</sup> Mr. Edwin Ogbu called it "a crime against humanity, and the

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<sup>82</sup>Security Council Resolution 282 (1970).

<sup>83</sup>A/SPC/L. 182.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>General Assembly Resolution 2636 (XXV).

United Nations, by keeping quiet or by continuing to allow this (South African) delegation-which unfortunately sits close to Somalia, making it very uncomfortable for them.... To continue to sit here is tantamount to condoning a crime which is being committed against our brothers in Southern Africa."<sup>86</sup> Although this endeavour did not result in the expulsion of South Africa from the world body, it featured a very strong condemnation of her policies and, according to the President of the General Assembly, "constitute [d] a very solemn warning to that government."<sup>87</sup>

As regards Zimbabwe, representatives of 39 African member states including Nigeria requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council on March 6, 1970, to consider a so called proclamation of Republic by the illegal regime of Ian Smith.<sup>88</sup> The African states expressed disappointment at what they viewed as limited nature of the action requested by the United Kingdom in an effort to unseat the illegal regime. In a meeting held by the Security Council on 18th March, the Council reaffirmed its resolution 216 (1965) which condemned Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence. It also condemned his illegal proclamation of republican status; decided that member states should refrain

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>S/9682 (1970).

from recognizing this illegal regime or from rendering any assistance to it; and reaffirmed the primary responsibility of the government of the United Kingdom to enable the people of Zimbabwe to exercise their rights to self determination and independence.<sup>89</sup>

In relation to Namibia, the Security Council adopted three resolutions in 1970<sup>90</sup> as a result of requests from Nigeria and other member states,<sup>91</sup> asking the Security Council to prevail on states having economic and other interests in Namibia to refrain from any dealings with South Africa.

In addition, Nigeria co-sponsored a draft resolution<sup>92</sup> condemning the support given to South Africa in pursuit of its repressive policies in Namibia by the allies of South Africa and in particular, by its major trading partners, and financial, economic and other interests operating in the country. In a roll-call vote taken on December 9, 1970, the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution by 95 to 5, with 14 abstentions.<sup>93</sup>

On October 30, 1972, Nigeria introduced a draft resolution in the Special Political Committee of the U.N. on "the situation in South Africa resulting from the policies

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<sup>89</sup>Resolution 277 (1970).

<sup>90</sup>276 (1970); 283 (1970); and 284 (1970).

<sup>91</sup>S/9616 and Add. 1-3.

<sup>92</sup>A/C.4/L. 964.

<sup>93</sup>General Assembly Resolution 2678 (XXV).

of Apartheid. It was approved by the Committee on November 1 by a roll-call vote of 96 to 3 with 21 abstentions. The same resolution was adopted by the Plenary on November 15 by a roll-call vote of 100 to 4 with 21 abstentions.<sup>94</sup>

In 1974, Nigeria fought together, though without success, with 41 other African countries for the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations. Although the African move was unsuccessful, it resulted in a major policy speech by the South African delegates, Mr. Roelof Botha, who said that his country would do "everything in our power to move away from discrimination based on race or colour."<sup>95</sup> Although the South African Government did not honor its promise, Mr. Botha's statement was nothing short of an admission of guilt.

However it was during the Muhammed/Obasanjo administrations that Nigeria's unyielding anti-racialist attitude assumed a greater momentum at the United Nations. Deeply shocked over the large scale killings and wounding of Africans in Soweto (a black township outside Johannesburg in South Africa), following the callous shooting of African people including school children demonstrating against racial discrimination on June 16, 1976, the Nigerian delegation to the Thirty-first session of the U.N. General Assembly introduced a draft resolution entitled "Economic Collaboration with South

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<sup>94</sup>U.S. Participation in the U.N., Repeal on the United Nation, 1972 (Department of State Publication, 1972), p. 162.

<sup>95</sup>A.R.B. (October 1-31, 1974), p. 4311.

Africa," which was eventually sponsored by 63 states.<sup>96</sup> The resolution in part, emphasized that (1) any collaboration with South Africa constitutes a hostile act against the oppressed people of South Africa, (2) condemned in strong terms, the actions of those states that continued to collaborate with South Africa and (3) called on member states to refrain forthwith from any economic collaboration with South Africa and to prohibit investments in that country.

In his comments on South Africa's behavior, Brigadier Garba declared,

We shall never relent until the South African racists appreciate that such abuse of power, such degradation of human values, cannot stand the test of time. We in Nigeria are convinced that the genocide being perpetrated by the racist regime in South Africa, to which some powerful members of this assembly continue to turn a blind eye, cannot solve in perpetuity the basic problems of human resistance and reaction to suffering.<sup>97</sup>

The resolution was adopted overwhelmingly by 110 votes to 6 against, with 24 abstentions.<sup>98</sup> Eleven other resolutions condemning South Africa were adopted during this session and all received affirmative votes from Nigeria.

Another incident that engaged international attention was the establishment of a so called "Transkei state" by the

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid. (June 1-31, 1976), p. 4062. 76 people died and about 1139, wounded during the Soweto incident (Times of London, June 26, 1976).

<sup>97</sup>A/31/250/Add. 1.

<sup>98</sup>Resolution 31/6H.

Republic of South Africa. Such a South African artificially created African state within the Republic was nothing short of a concentration camp for Africans herded together because of the color of their skin. When South Africa granted independence to Transkei on October 26, 1976, there was an almost universal condemnation of Mr. Vorster's racist manoeuvres. The United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution (U.N. General Assembly Res/31/6A) coinciding with the start of the U.N.'s annual debate on apartheid, which declared invalid, the independence granted to the Transkei. Of the 135 delegates that were present during the debate, it was only the U.S. which abstained on the grounds that it could not support a provision asking states to prohibit individuals or corporations from having dealings with Transkei. This resolution was introduced by Nigerian representative Mr. Leslie Harriman, who referred to the Transkei independence day as "a dark day, a day of mourning in much of Africa."

The Nigerian resolution, after recalling a 1975 resolution condemning the establishment of bantustans by the racist regimes of South Africa, (1) Strongly condemned the establishment of bantustans as "designed to consolidate the inhuman policies of apartheid, to destroy the territorial integrity of the country, to perpetuate white minority domination, and to dispossess the African people of South Africa of their inalienable rights; (2) Rejected the validity of the declaration of independence of Transkei; (3) Called on all governments to deny recognition to and refrain from

any dealings with the so-called independent Transkei;  
 (4) Asked all states to prohibit all those under their jurisdiction from having any dealings with the Transkei. In the end, no country accorded recognition to the Transkei except the Republic of South Africa.

The Namibia question received more serious attention of the U.N. in 1976. Nigeria co-sponsored eight draft resolutions in the General Assembly that year condemning the illegal occupation of the territory by South Africa.<sup>99</sup> In the face of increasing international pressure, South Africa had arranged in 1974, for various "population groups" of Namibia to hold constitutional talks dubbed "Turnhalle Conference" that would lead to Namibian independence in December 1978.<sup>100</sup> This was seen by most members of the U.N. including Nigeria as "a fake constitutional conference," particularly since it excluded S.W.A.P.O., the authentic representatives of the Namibian people.<sup>101</sup> The Nigerian representative, Brigadier Garba termed the conference "a gross insult to the international community."<sup>102</sup> Not even Ambassador Moynihan of the United States Government regarded the constitutional conference as a "definitive exercise of

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<sup>99</sup>Resolutions 31/146 through 31/153.

<sup>100</sup>Current History (November 1976), pp. 161-164.

<sup>101</sup>A/31/250/Add. 1.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

self determination because significant political groups were not permitted to participate."<sup>103</sup>

On January 30, 1976, the Security Council adopted a resolution<sup>104</sup> which set forth specific principles for the Namibian settlement. The substantive elements of that resolution include: (1) free elections under U.N. supervision and control for the whole of Namibia as one political entity; (2) adequate time, to be determined by the Security Council, to enable the U.N. to establish electoral oversight machinery and to enable the Namibian people to organize politically for elections; (3) South African withdrawal and the transfer of power to the Namibian people with the assistance of the United Nations; (4) release of all Namibian political prisoners including those detained in either Namibia or South Africa for violations of the internal security laws; (5) repeal of all discriminatory laws and regulations and deletion of the system of bantustans in Namibia; and (6) unhindered return of Namibian exiles without fear of intimidating arrest, detention or imprisonment.<sup>105</sup>

Although the Western members of the Security Council (France, Great Britain, Canada, West Germany and the U.S.) adopted that resolution, they later abandoned it and con-

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>385 (1976).

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.



certed in March and April 1977 to "develop a unified approach to exploratory talks with the Government of South Africa" on the Namibian future.<sup>106</sup> However, their efforts proved abortive due to South Africa's intransigence over the independence date and time of elections; the registration of voters and the size and composition of U.N. peace-keeping force.<sup>107</sup>

The Thirty-second session of the General Assembly was also dominated by Zimbabwean issues. Nigeria co-sponsored two draft resolutions which got the approval of the General Assembly.<sup>108</sup> The first resolution (32/116A), approved on December 16, 1977, (1) reaffirmed the legitimacy of the self determination struggle of the people of Zimbabwe by all means at their disposal as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations; (2) demanded an end to repression by the Salisbury Regime, the unconditional release of all Zimbabwean political prisoners, the end of foreign immigration to Zimbabwe and the withdrawal of all mercenaries serving there; (3) called on all states to prevent the advertisement for and recruitment of mercenaries for service in Zimbabwe; and (4) requested all states to assist Mozambique and Botswana to strengthen their defense capabilities.

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<sup>106</sup>Nigeria at the U.N. (1978), p. 9.

<sup>107</sup>Africa, No. 85 (September, 1978).

<sup>108</sup>Resolution 32/116A; 32/116B.

The second resolution,<sup>109</sup> also adopted on the 16th of December, (1) condemned the policies of those governments, particularly that of South Africa, which continue to collaborate with the Smith regime and enable it to evade U.N. sanctions; (2) called upon all states to prevent their corporations from violating sanctions against Zimbabwe; (3) requested the Security Council to consider the expansion of sanctions against Zimbabwe; and (4) requested the Security Council to impose a mandatory oil embargo on South Africa.

Meanwhile, Britain and U.S. came up with an "Anglo-American package" designed to "provide an electoral situation (in Zimbabwe) where the most popular figure can win."<sup>110</sup> Although this plan had the backing of Nigeria and the front line states,<sup>111</sup> it was grounded by inaction on the part of both Mr. Smith and the initiators, allowing the former an ample opportunity for dubious manoeuvres that led to his "internal settlement" arrangements<sup>112</sup> which also proved unworkable.

The Thirty Third Session of the U.N. was dominated by Ian Smith's "Internal Settlement" proposal which was regarded by most members except the Western nations as duplicity and

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<sup>109</sup>32/116B.

<sup>110</sup>New African Development No. 125 (January 1978), p. 19. For the basic elements of the proposal, see U.S. Participation in the U.N., p. 249.

<sup>111</sup>Refer to p. 116.

<sup>112</sup>Refer to p. 117.

hypocrisy of the white minority rulers of Zimbabwe. Nigeria rejected the proposal and became a party to a resolution sponsored by seven African and non-aligned members in the Security Council. The resolution condemned "all attempts and manoeuvres" by the Ian Smith regime "aimed at the retention of power by a racist minority. It also declared that the speedy termination of the illegal regime and the replacement of its military and police forces was the first prerequisite for the restoration of legality in Zimbabwe.<sup>113</sup>

Between 1967 and 1979, a total of 210 draft resolutions were introduced in the United Nations General Assembly condemning Southern African apartheid system and colonialism. Out of this number, Nigeria sponsored or co-sponsored 180 (85.7 percent). Also, out of a total number of 150 votes taken within this period, Nigeria recorded 150 affirmative votes condemning Southern African minority regimes.<sup>114</sup>

For all of Nigeria's anti-racialist stand therefore, it is very significant that on October 11, 1978, a gold medal and a citation were awarded to Mrs. Murtala Muhammed on behalf of her husband by the Secretary General of the U.N., His Excellency Kurt Waldheim, "for his (Muhammed's) distinguished

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<sup>113</sup>A.R.B., March 1-31, 1978, p. 4790.

<sup>114</sup>Summary of resolutions and votes is adopted from (a) United Nations Year Book, 1967-1975; (b) United Nations General Assembly Official Records, Plenary meetings, and Special Political Committee Meetings (United Nations, New York, 1967-1977).

service in the struggle against apartheid." This was in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/6G of November 9, 1976 which authorized the Special Committee against Apartheid "to establish an award to be presented to persons who have, in cooperation with the U.N. and in solidarity with the South African liberation movements, contributed significantly to the international campaign against apartheid."<sup>115</sup>

#### The O.A.U.

During the Nigerian Civil War, the Federal Military Government succeeded in winning a commitment from the O.A.U. that it would support Nigeria's endeavor to maintain its territorial integrity. The actions of the O.A.U. was consistent with the Organization's principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states and its commitment to the territorial status quo of independent African states.

The O.A.U. support for a United Nigeria certainly limited the degree of the internationalization of the conflict and eventually contributed to Biafran surrender. There-

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<sup>115</sup> Other recipients of the awards were the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah former President of Ghana, and the late Pandit Nehru of India (See "Record of the Special meeting of the General Assembly for the International Anti-Apartheid Year and presentation of awards for distinguished service in the struggle against Apartheid, 11th October, 1978" in Solidarity With the Oppressed People of South Africa published by the United Nation Centre Against Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, November, 1978.

fore at the end of the war, Nigeria became quite deeply committed to the principles of the O.A.U. charter and the use of the O.A.U. as a forum for the propagation of its foreign policy.

Like the United Nations, the O.A.U. continued to deal with the struggle against colonialism in Zimbabwe, illegal occupation of Namibia, racist domination of South Africa, and the ruthless suppression of any attempt by the African populations of the Portuguese African territories to claim the right to self determination.

In December 1970, an emergency meeting of the Organization of African Unity Ministerial Council was held in Lagos, Nigeria to consider the attempted invasion of Guinea by Portugal on November 22, 1970.<sup>116</sup> The meeting was first addressed by the Nigerian leader General Yakubu Gowon who advised against "long debates and resolutions" and urged members to determine how best to assist Guinea "without delay, in a concrete manner," to repel the invading forces.<sup>117</sup> Three main items on the agenda were: (1) The means of helping Guinea to safeguard its sovereignty and integrity from any future attack; (b) The means of protecting African states from any new foreign aggression; and (c) The pursuit of the

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<sup>116</sup>For detailed account of the invasion, see Africa Contemporary Record, 1970-1971 (London: Rex Collings, 1972), pp. B365-B371.

<sup>117</sup>Resolution CM/Res. 17 (VII) and CM/18 (VII).

task of liberating those territories still under foreign domination, and measures to outlaw the use of mercenaries. It was decided that member states should provide immediate bilateral aid to the Republic of Guinea so as to enable it to face the consequence of aggression. But more importantly, the O.A.U. agreed to set up a special O.A.U. fund to provide financial, military and technical assistance to Guinea.<sup>118</sup>

Another major Southern African issue dominated the attention of the O.A.U. in 1971. This was South Africa's proposal for a dialogue with independent African countries. The South African Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster had indicated that he was prepared to enter into a treaty or a non-aggression pact with African states. However there was no indication of any attitudinal change in regard to his apartheid policy. Albeit, certain African countries led by Ivory Coast welcomed his initiatives on the ground that "in a confrontation (with South Africa), Black Africa would lose hands down and it is therefore pointless to try."<sup>119</sup> Their views can be summarized thus: (a) The armed struggle of the national liberation movements had failed; (b) The African states did not possess the military and economic resources to challenge South Africa decisively; (c) The trade embargo was certain to fail:

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>West Africa (June 18, 1971), p. 638.

non-African powers, including the U.S.A., Britain, France, West Germany and Japan would not stop trading with South Africa, and a number of African states could not afford to do so; (d) If the Independent African states engaged in a dialogue with the South African Government, this would encourage moderate white opinion and influential business pressure groups within South Africa to make peace with the Black majority and put an end to apartheid. Alternatively it might bring about a change in the South African regime itself by methods which only those who live in the country could legitimately use.<sup>120</sup>

Nigeria and Ethiopia took the first step in condemning the dialogue policy. General Gowon of Nigeria and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia met in May 1971 and laid down the O.A.U. guiding principles for dealing with the issue. Both men released a joint communique on May 8, 1971 stating that there could be no meaningful dialogue which was not based on respect for human equality and dignity consistent with the Lusaka manifesto.<sup>121</sup> General Gowon reiterated this at a banquet given for him by President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya when he warned,

...it will be a great betrayal if we only pay lip service to the cause of liberation of the people of South Africa, or if we assume that we can

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<sup>120</sup>Peter Enahoro, "Dialogue," Africa No. 2 (London) (July 1971), p. 15.

<sup>121</sup>Press Release by the Federal Ministry of Information, No. 46 (May 12, 1971). The Text of the Manifesto was published

restore their dignity by bargaining on economic or other selfish grounds with their oppressors. He declared, "Nigeria will not be a party to any dialogue with those whose only aim is to divide our ranks and subjugate our brothers, forever, in servitude and degradation....<sup>122</sup>

Dr. Arikpo, then the Nigerian Commissioner for External Affairs called the South African initiatives, "insincere, dubious and mischievous," and stated that "apart from the suspect nature of the offer, it had been made by a government which was not the legal representative of South Africa."<sup>123</sup> On his insistence, the item was placed on the agenda of the O.A.U. Council of Ministers' Conference held in June, 1971. Several African countries led by Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania vehemently condemned any dialogue with South Africa, saying that such an action was against the charter of the O.A.U.

In the end, a resolution was passed by the Ministerial Council stating that there was no basis for a meaningful dialogue with South Africa and also reaffirming the Organization's determination to continue rendering its assistance to the liberation movements until victory was achieved. The resolution was passed by 27 votes to 10 and with 4 abstentions.<sup>124</sup>

Under General Yakubu Gowon who was Nigeria's Head of

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as U.N. Document, U.N./93 (137) (February 23, 1972).

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> A.C.R. (1971), p. B422.

<sup>124</sup> CM/st. 5(XVII, 1971).



State from July 1966 to 1975, Nigeria increased its role among African states within the O.A.U. in matters concerning South African apartheid, and proposed Anglo-Zimbabwean settlements and other anti-colonial proposals. However, with the emergence of General Murtala Muhammed and later General Obasanjo, as Nigeria's Heads of State in 1975 and 1976 respectively, Nigeria's leadership role in the O.A.U. particularly in its initiatives to settle the Anglo-Zimbabwean issues, became very conspicuous. Obviously there is no better statement which clarifies Nigeria's more activist and militant African policy than the one made by General Muhammed at the Extra-ordinary Summit Conference of the O.A.U., held in Addis Ababa in January 1976, to discuss the crisis in Angola in which he asserted,

Africa has come of age. It is no longer under the orbit of any extra continental power. It should no longer take orders from any country however powerful. The fortunes of Africa are in our hands to make or mar. For too long have we been treated like adolescents who cannot discern their interests and act accordingly. For too long has it been presumed that the African needs outside "experts" to tell him who are his friends and who are his enemies.

The time has come when we should make it clear that we can decide for ourselves; that we know our own interests and how to protect those interests; that we are capable of resolving African problems without presumptuous lessons in ideological dangers, which more often than not have no relevance for us nor for the problem at hand.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Federal Nigeria 1:1 (October-December, 1976), p. 19.

The Angolan crisis provided the first real challenge to Nigeria's new direction in Southern African policy and its utilization of the O.A.U. to demonstrate this new direction. Thus its first stand was that taken in support of the O.A.U. line in favor of reconciliation and national unity in Angola. But later, it came out in support of the MPLA and very actively convinced other African states to recognize that nationalist group as Angola's sole representative. The first emergency summit conference of the O.A.U., held in Addis Ababa from January 10-12, 1976 to discuss the Angolan situation ended in a deadlock.<sup>126</sup> But when Nigeria took the lead in according its recognition to MPLA, majority of African countries, who argued against such a move reversed their position.<sup>127</sup> Hence on February 11, 1976, the O.A.U. officially recognized the MPLA proclaimed People's Republic of Angola as a member of the Organization.<sup>128</sup>

During the same year, the O.A.U. Council of Ministers

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<sup>126</sup>22 countries including Nigeria voted for the recognition of MPLA while 22 countries voted for the reconciliation of the three contending parties. The rest were neutral. (See Africa Research Bulletin (June 1-30, 1976), p. 3883).

<sup>127</sup>The Nigerian Commissioner for External Affairs held consultations with some African Heads of State before Nigeria's recognition of the MPLA. (See Ministry of Information Release No. 1538, December 1, 1978).

<sup>128</sup>A.C.R. (1975-1976), p. B799.

unanimously adopted a resolution condemning New Zealand for participating in sporting activities with Southern Africa and also called on all members of the organization to reconsider their participation in that year's games in Canada if New Zealand was not prevailed upon by the I.O.C. to abstain.<sup>129</sup> Nigeria's decision to pull out marked the beginning of the withdrawal of other O.A.U. members as New Zealand defiantly participated in the games. Shortly afterwards, Nigeria re-echoed in the O.A.U., its disapproval of the Anglo-American efforts to reach a settlement in Zimbabwe without the prior consent of majority of the Zimbabweans. Nigeria's position, which was also that of the O.A.U., was adopted after it became clear that Britain and the U.S. were unwilling to stand solidly behind their proposals. A resolution was therefore passed by the O.A.U. calling on member states to reject the British American plans.<sup>130</sup>

Several other O.A.U. resolutions of Southern Africa gained the active support of Murtala/Obasanjo Administrations. Some of these dealt with Namibia (C.M./Res. 629 (XXXI), 1978); Sanctions Against the Minority regimes of Southern Africa (C.M./Res. 623 (XXXI) and Special Resolution on Sanctions Against the Smith Regime (Assembly of Heads of Government (AHG/Res. 89 (XV)).

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<sup>129</sup>CM/Res./488 (XXVII), 1976.

<sup>130</sup>A.C.I. (1978-1979), pp. C5-6.

On the whole, Nigeria's deep commitment to gain Southern Africa's liberation through the medium of the O.A.U. and on the basis of its activities outside the organization, earned her much admiration from Afro Asian countries. In applauding the country's significant stand at a press conference in Helsinki, Finland in 1976, President Julius Nyerere who is one of the outstanding fighters against the oppression of the blacks in Southern Africa said, "We (Tanzanians) feel a closeness to Nigeria although the neighborliness is more spiritual than geographical."<sup>131</sup> Also, while the Pakistani Government, through its ambassador in Nigeria in 1976, praised "the excellent vanguard role" played by Nigeria in the fight against racism "in all its form" in Southern Africa, the Vice Premier of the Democratic Republic of North Korea, in his remarks while leading a ten-man delegation to Nigeria, expressed his country's happiness over Nigeria's leadership" in Africa.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Ministry of Information Release, No. 614 (May 19, 1976).

<sup>132</sup>Daily Sketch (Nigeria) (January 24, 1977), p. 3.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND UPDATE ON THE POST MILITARY REGIME

On the basis of the data presented in this study, it is evident that there are significant differences between the African policy of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966) and that of the subsequent regimes (1967-1979). For instance, whereas, Sir Abubakar's regime was obsessively preoccupied with pro-Western tendencies which led to numerous compromises in its stand against apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa, the post Abubakar regimes placed greater emphasis on independence in the conduct of their foreign relations. Secondly while the late Prime Minister's Southern African policy had been passive and characterized by caution and conservatism, the subsequent regimes were more assertive and played a more dynamic role in their relations with that region.

Thirdly, it is important to mention that the Abubakar regime occasionally gave in to the aspirations of radical elements in Nigeria by adopting a tough stand against the racist trio in Southern Africa. But this position had always been reversed to avoid any circumstances where confrontation

or antagonizing the West was potential. This made the country's external behavior seem inconsistent and incomprehensible.

Conversely events have shown that the post Abubakar regimes never yielded ground to blackmail or intimidation in regard to their policies vis-a-vis Southern Africa. One glaring instance contained in this study was the rebuff by General Murtala Muhammed of the "arm-twisting" mission sent by President Ford early in 1976, to protest Russian and Cuban presence in Africa. In addition, Nigeria during the Muhammed/Obasanjo administration was one of the first African countries to recognize the MPLA Government of Angola against the wishes of the Western nations.

It may be necessary to mention that Nigeria's record in the U.N. and O.A.U. during Sir Abubakar's regime was nearly as good as that of subsequent regimes as the data in this study indicate. However there was a yawning difference between what his administration's record said and what his administration actually did about the country's external environment. For instance, on one hand his administration voted in the U.N. for an immediate termination of colonialism in Southern Africa, while on the other hand, it introduced a resolution in 1961 calling for complete independence of all African countries by 1970, meaning ten years later. This same government also voted against the expulsion of South Africa from the U.N. despite its verbal battles against

that racist regime.<sup>1</sup>

Several observations can be made in regard to the trend and development of Nigeria's Southern African relations based on the analysis of the factors already identified as the determinants of the country's African policy. In the first place, its foreign policy process, like that of any state reflects (1) The quality and quantity of capabilities at its disposal (2) Skill in mobilizing these capabilities in support of foreign policy objectives (3) The credibility of threats (4) The degree of need or dependence, and (5) The degree of responsiveness from the target country.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly during Abubakar's regime, the capabilities within his disposal were not very strong. For instance, although the country was blessed with mineral resources, its economy was still very poor and underdeveloped. Its military establishment was meagre compared with that of other regional powers like Egypt, South Africa and Brazil. Above all, Abubakar's leadership was faced with internal and external constraints which made skillful mobilization of any amount of capabilities, a "wild goose chase." His leadership problems could be better understood from Rosenau's postulation, that, "domestic sources of foreign policy are not less crucial to its content and conduct than are the international situations

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<sup>1</sup>For all the inconsistencies of Sir Abubakar's administration, refer to pp. 51-55 and 78-85 of this study.

<sup>2</sup>Holsti, op. cit., p. 176.

toward which they are directed."<sup>3</sup> Sir Abubakar's predicament is understandable in view of Nigeria's ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, complicated by tribally and regionally based political parties, and a federal structure that institutionalized regionalism and ethnicity.

Although the post Balewa regimes could not eradicate tribalism, they were able to centralize the Nigerian political system, redefine the powers and functions of state governments, and concentrate overriding powers in the hands of the central government, therefore making the country's foreign policy more comprehensible. Thus, Howard Lentner made a point when he said that "the reorganization on two or three occasions of Nigeria's federal system marks another example of structural changes that made a difference in foreign policy decision making."<sup>4</sup>

Sir Abubakar's regime was also faced with external constraints which were mostly rooted in Nigeria's colonial history and legacies. On independence, the British bequeathed to Nigeria, elements of her educational, administrative, legal and financial systems. Its economy became structurally tied to the Western countries. Understandably the regime wished to avoid any circumstances which might lead to antagonism or confrontation with the West. As a

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<sup>3</sup>James N. Rosenau, ed., Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Howard Lentner, op. cit., p. 196.



result of Nigeria's vulnerability to the West, it lacked the ability to mobilize its capabilities in support of its foreign policy objectives. Therefore any attempt to employ threat or blackmail to influence the outcome of events in Southern Africa would lack credibility. It would therefore elicit a negative response from the target countries.

However the emergence of oil as a predominant factor in the Nigerian economy during the 1970s added immense credibility to Nigeria's capabilities. With the rapid economic growth of the post Balewa era and Nigeria's ability to use oil as a weapon against oil-hungry Western nations, the West's paternal attitude towards Nigeria changed considerably. The post Abubakar regimes continued socio-economic association with both the East and the West. However General Gowon made it clear that "any deliberate attempt to establish areas of influence will negate the prime objective."<sup>5</sup> By this statement, he was sounding a note of warning to countries that might tamper with Nigeria's sovereignty and all its ramifications.

Furthermore, Nigeria's modest military capability during the first republic might have been a factor in its low profile foreign policy posture. However as its potential increased after the civil war, there was increased reliance on the military strength for African policy decisions. The

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<sup>5</sup>"Army Won't Hand Over in Chaos," Nigerian Round Up 1:1 (February 23, 1970), p. 2.

theoretical implication of this is obvious. To quote David Wilkinson, "a potential of military and economic capabilities [of a state] much larger than those actually possessed may promote long term planning and a shift in foreign policy concerns away from immediate gratification."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, like the increased economic capabilities and dynamic political leadership of the post Balewa administrations, increased military power may also explain Nigeria's more dynamic role in Southern African issues. General Obasanjo did not mince words about his confidence in Nigeria's increasing role against colonialism and apartheid when in 1977, he urged Nigerian soldiers to be prepared for "greater sacrifice" in South Africa.<sup>7</sup> The former Nigerian Head of State said that the Southern African problem was "entering a crucial state," adding, "This is the time we can give our moral, financial and national support to the oppressed people."<sup>8</sup>

Finally, as a result of the civil war, the military regimes diversified their contacts with the outside world. They concluded new trade, cultural and economic agreements with the Communist bloc including the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>David Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>West Africa (August 8, 1977).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Gordon Idang, Nigeria: International Politics and Foreign Policy, 1960-1966 (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, September 1973), p. 154.

Such contacts improved Nigeria's relations with these countries, thereby minimizing her lukewarm attitude or general suspicion of them. With this diversification of external relations, Nigeria no longer runs the risks of economic blackmail due to total dependence on the Western world, nor must she accept foreign policy dictations from the West due to such structural dependence. In actuality, Nigeria has become a force to reckon with in Africa. This opinion was expressed by the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Mr. Andrew Young, who believes that nothing can be done in Africa without Nigerian support and while in Lagos in August 1977 during an Anti-Apartheid Conference, credited the Obasanjo regime with bringing about a "new sensitivity of the West" to apartheid and the problems of Southern Africa.<sup>10</sup>

It is too early to make an accurate evaluation of the African policy stance of the present regime headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari. However it could be argued that his regime possesses the same basic ingredients which stimulated the policy making capability of the military regimes. First, the Nineteen-state structure has helped to create an atmosphere of unity, co-existence and stability among Nigeria's ethnic and linguistic groups. It has also helped weaken the monolithic power of the North, thereby fostering a healthy balance of power among the various units of the Republic.

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<sup>10</sup>African Research Bulletin (August 1-31, 1977), p. 4522.

The present federal structure has not only helped to minimize ethnic tensions, but has also facilitated the recognition of overall national objectives. In addition, the present system which has enhanced the centralization and concentration of power and authority in the hands of the federal government, gives an increasing impetus to the present administration to assert its supremacy and exclusive jurisdiction in the area of foreign policy. Thus no longer can regional authorities encroach on foreign policy preserve of the federal government nor can any state embark on unilateral foreign policy expeditions inimical to the overall national interests.

The overriding concern with national unity, and the prevention of a recurrence of the ethnic-regional cleavages that destroyed the first republic gave rise to constitutional provisions which stipulate that (1) The national cabinet must include a minister from each of the nineteen states and that the successful presidential candidate must receive not only the most votes but at least one-fourth of the vote in two-thirds of the nineteen states.<sup>11</sup> Also, political parties are nationally rather than ethnically or regionally based in order to limit the tribalistic and divisive nature of the politics of the first civilian regime which crippled not only the domestic aspect but also the international dimension of

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<sup>11</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, Chapter VI, part 1A Sections 124-126.

the Nigerian politics.<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, the present regime inherited the economic and military capacity of the military regimes. Oil is still very prominent in the nation's economy and continues to be utilized as an instrument of foreign policy. As regards the military, a reduction was made in the strength of the army but this is being made up by improved equipment in consonance with the Obasanjo regime's defense policy which prioritized adequate manpower, training, equipment and combat readiness.<sup>13</sup>

As the largest black nation on earth, Nigeria continues to build a powerful defense capability to back up her size and positive foreign policy posture. Expressing his views in a recent interview in relation to Nigeria's defense position, the Nigerian Minister of Defense, Professor Iya Abubakar declared,

I would like to see that we have strong, virile, mobile, well-equipped armed forces having modern weaponry with sufficient teeth to bite and with adequate fire power to knock out any aggressor.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the recent uranium find in the country the Defense Minister added that it would "guarantee a regular supply...to Nigeria's nuclear industry, provide her with an additional source of funds for acquiring the other components

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Part III D, Section 301-309.

<sup>13</sup>West Africa (April 9, 1979), p. 616.

<sup>14</sup>West Africa (May 19, 1980), p. 874.

for nuclear technology and facilitate her negotiations with other nuclear powers for cooperation in the development of nuclear capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

In the same vein, the idea of the establishment of an ECOWAS Defense Force as a regional defense force whose main objective is the "maintenance of peace and harmony, territorial integrity, and security in member states,"<sup>16</sup> is being pushed by Nigeria and is receiving adequate attention throughout West Africa. Nigeria's leadership role in Africa was felt when it spearheaded a move that barred the new Liberian Head of State, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe from representing his country at the fifth Summit meeting of the ECOWAS held in Togo in May.<sup>17</sup> Earlier in April, the Nigerian Government refused to let Sergeant Doe into Nigeria to attend an O.A.U. Economic Summit.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore one could easily surmise that Alhaji Shagari's Government will continue with dynamic African policy of the military regimes. Interestingly enough, at the on set of his regime on October 1, 1979, he indicated that Africa would remain the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> He

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 873-874.

<sup>16</sup>Africa Research Bulletin (February 1-29, 1980), p. 5568.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., May 1-30, 1980, p. 5664.

<sup>18</sup>Nigeria refused to accord recognition to Sergeant Doe's Government after he carried out a coup in which President Tolbert was killed, Africa Research Bulletin (April 1-30, 1980).

<sup>19</sup>The First 100 Days of Mister President (Published by

reiterated Nigeria's dedication to rid Africa of racial bigotry and the vestiges of colonialism. During the fourteenth week of his presidency, he named a three member Nigerian observer team to participate fully in transitional arrangements leading to the final handing over of power to a popularly elected government in Zimbabwe. The team was led by Mr. Samuel G. Ikoku, former chairman of the Committee of Action Against Apartheid.<sup>20</sup>

The President had earlier called on Britain to ensure that the election leading to Zimbabwe independence be free and fair. In that connection, he suggested the establishment of a peace-keeping force to promote a meaningful ceasefire operation in Zimbabwe during the election period. Above all, some representatives of his administration participated in the constitutional talks in London leading to the granting of black majority rule to Zimbabwe.<sup>21</sup> It was on the basis of the satisfactory outcome of the talks that the Nigerian Government, on December 24, 1979, lifted sanctions earlier imposed on Zimbabwe.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the history of the two regimes, it seems that Nigeria during its early years did not seem willing to

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the Office of the President: Department of Information (Nigeria), January 9, 1980.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

make demands on other nation states commensurate with its position in the world economy, and as a major regime on the continent of Africa. However this might be explained by the fact that Nigeria was an infant as a nation state and in that sense was trying to find its appropriate niche in international politics. And of course none of the foreign policy makers of Nigeria had any experience in this area. But as the state and policy makers themselves became more mature and confident of their ability to influence other nations, and as the objective basis of Nigeria's power changed positively, the subsequent regimes were more aggressive in making demands on other national actors. Those who envision a world free of racial oppression can only hope that this change continues.



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